

Epidemiologic Characteristics of Ebola Virus Disease

Moran Ki

1) *Department of Cancer Control and Policy, Graduate School of Cancer Science and Policy
National Cancer Center, Goyang 410-769 KOREA*

Corresponding Author: Moran Ki, moranki@naver.com

ABSTRACT

Ebola virus disease (hereafter Ebola) has a high fatality rate; currently lacks a treatment or vaccine with proven safety and efficacy, and thus many people fear this infection. As of October 29, 2014, 13,703 cases (confirmed, probable, and suspected) have been reported with the Ebola virus over the past ten months in six affected countries (Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Sierra Leone, Spain, and the United States of America) and two previously affected countries (Nigeria and Senegal). Among these patients, approximately 1 in 2 has subsequently died from the disease. In response, the World Health Organization (WHO) has declared the Ebola outbreak in West Africa to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). However, Ebola is only transmitted by patients who already present symptoms of the disease, and infection only occurs upon direct contact with the blood or body fluids of an Ebola patient. Consequently, transmission of the outbreak can be contained through careful monitoring for fever among persons who have visited, or come into contact with persons from, the site of the outbreak. Thus, patients suspected of presenting symptoms characteristic of Ebola should be quarantined. To date, South Korea is not equipped with the special containment clinical units and biosafety level 4 (BL4) facilities required to contain the outbreak of a fatal virus disease, such as Ebola. Therefore, it is necessary for South Korea to make strategies to the outbreak by using present facilities as quickly as possible. It is also imperative that the government establish suitable communication with its citizens to prevent the spread of uninformed fear and anxiety regarding the Ebola outbreak.