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Ebola virus disease in Sierra Leone: local experience & evidence of a preponderance of female survivors

Luke Kane

Lewisham GP Vocational Training Scheme, NHS, London, United Kingdom

Corresponding author: Dr Luke Kane, Nhs, Lewisham GPVTS, London, UK. E-mail: lukejpkane@gmail.com

As a GP trainee, I worked in an Ebola Treatment Centre in Sierra Leone during the height of the outbreak. My aim in this study was to record the demographics and outcomes of patients in this Ebola Treatment Centre. This was done as a prospective case-series study between 1st January 2015 and 4th February 2015. During this period, there were 59 presentations to the centre. Of these, 30 (51%) tested Ebola PCR positive with 29 negative sequential tests. There were 22 deaths, including 4 deaths unrelated to Ebola, giving our Ebola treatment centre a 60% mortality rate for confirmed Ebola patients. Our Ebola patient group was composed of 53% female and 47% male patients with an age range of 7 months to 85 years old; average age 32. Out of the 18 deaths in confirmed Ebola patients, 12 (67%) were in males. Of the 12 Ebola survivors, 83% were female. As the epidemic in West Africa enters the final stage, it is important to collate local data and experience so that we can mobilise a more rapid and efficient response to future outbreaks. Demographics in this specific Ebola Treatment Centre compare similarly to other Sierra Leonean centres. Our experiences also echo wider findings about the preponderance of female survivors compared to males and provide further evidence for considering sex-specific public-health interventions in future haemorrhagic fever outbreaks.