

## **We are all third world countries in our Ebola Response**

The news is horrifying and sounds like a tale from ancient times. Unknown innocents are exposed to the potential of a horrible death from a disease that has no known cure. Once contracted, over two-thirds will die and death will be one in which you bleed from every orifice including eyes, ears, nose, mouth and rectum. Surely, we must be describing the Black Death or Plague from the Middle Ages, but unlikely as it seems, this is the news of today. But, this is not some bulletin from a distant exotic land. The disease has entered through our front door and into our home in America. The sad part is that it does not have to be this way. All of this did not have to happen. But there is hope because if we change our ways now, this will stop!

Let's analyze carefully the first known case of Ebola brought in the United States. Through these steps we can see how we have had a third world response in our "advanced country"

### **Step 1**

The patient is a 42 year old Liberian male.

Stop – All individuals from W. Africa should not be allowed in country without proper quarantine and isolation technique. This simple precaution would have prevented him from entering the United States. The concept of quarantine is hundreds of years old and the cost to benefit ratio is enormous. In this case, the patient was allowed to travel showing no sign of disease.

### **Step 2**

The patient came into contact with a pregnant Liberian female with Ebola 4 days before travel. He traveled with her to the hospital and was turned away for lack of space and rode with her again from the hospital and helped carry her into an apartment. The women reportedly died that night.

Stop – This individual should never have been allowed to board any plane. He should have been placed in immediate isolation in Liberia. Even if he did not

divulge the information in attempts to reach the US, a strict isolation and no fly zone would have prevented him from entering the US. Stopping any inbound travel from Guinea, Sierra Leon, Liberia and Nigeria will eliminate any of this from occurring. Just over the weekend as this article is written, a plane has landed at Newark with a potential Ebola patient. We need to stop this madness. A simple quarantine and isolation will prevent each and every case or potential case to date from arriving at our shores.

### Step 3

The patient had no trouble entering this country and within a few days was staying with family members in Dallas. The patient fell ill and went to the ER. Evidently, he told “someone” he was from Liberia. This drew no warning flags.

Stop – How could any healthcare professional not be informed that West African nations were being hammered by this deadly disease? The patient was seen, evaluated, given “antibiotics” for vomiting and released. This is unbelievable if true. How could the information of being in West Africa be ignored? Furthermore, how could the patient not tell the doctor he was carrying a near dead woman with Ebola just a few days earlier?

### Step 4

The patient returns to go home and his bodily fluids must cover his entire home. His relatives and contacts are exposed to the disease. Three days later he returns to the hospital and is admitted. He is initially in serious condition. But as of today, despite all our “best care” he is moved to the critical status.

Stop – The government is on the job. Evidently, according to reports the CDC initially orders the sidewalk, where Mr. Duncan vomiting profusely, to be power washed. Here is a picture.



Does anyone notice there is no Hazmat suit on the workers? The vomitus is being aerosolized and none of the workers have any protection. The equipment is not covered and the lady on the left is about to walk through the infected materials. The water is running where any passerby can bring it home.

Double Stop – Where is the Hazmat team to protect the community? There evidently is no infrastructure in place in a large cosmopolitan city to prevent the spread of disease. Dallas is one of the most sophisticated and populous cities in America. Where are those daunting resources we have been led to believe exist?

### Step 6

5 days after Mr. Duncan is hospitalized, finally a Hazmat team arrives. Evidently, a company called the Cleaning Guys is taking over. At first they thought the job would take three hours, but, now they are discovering it will take days. The family has been moved to a better location.

And so the third world response in America continues. A totally unnecessary outbreak of a deadly disease strikes our shores and every step of the way the government response has been incompetence.

This is an example of one man, where the nation's attention is riveted on the outbreak. What if the disease spreads? What if thousands are infected, as in the W. African nations? We don't have the physical capacity to handle thousands of special isolation Intensive Care Unit beds, their associated caregivers, medical machines and supplies. Our healthcare workers will be overwhelmed and many may not even come to work. Remember human nature and self-preservation are strong instincts.

If we have thousands of cases, where will we place all those exposed? How will we care for them while they are in isolation?

Who will clean up after thousands of cases of Ebola? Our Hazmat teams will be overburdened. Will the detritus remain for days, like in this case, to infect another subset of individuals?

Just a few days ago the head of UN Ebola Mission stated we are in a race against time. The Ebola virus can mutate and become an airborne pathogen. Once it becomes transmitted by respiratory means we begin the nightmare scenario. Instead of thousands, we could then be potentially dealing with hundreds of thousands or more likely, millions. We have very short memories, but the Spanish Flu of 1918-1920 infected roughly 500 million worldwide and killed 50-100 million people in a much less dense world. The First World War ended at the same time but did not reach this mortality level even counting soldiers and civilians.

But back to Ebola...the sad part of this, it is all so unnecessary. Simple measures will eliminate a great deal of risk. But yet, for completely unknown reasons we have not instituted them.

The first step is to eliminate all regular flights from West Africa. Allow no individuals whether American or West African into the country without a 21 day waiting period in a quarantine facility. This will eliminate 99% of the problems we have been experiencing to date. Do not depend on temperature taking in third world countries for the health of our nation. Stop all travel from these countries now.

Secondly, establish a response protocol and publish it for the government, the healthcare provider and for individuals. Uniform protocols within our country will allow ease of use and allow individuals a known source to turn to for questions.

Every individual who has contact with an Ebola patient is to be quarantined. For the sake of the community, an individual must be proven to be healthy before removal of the isolation.

Each hospital is to ask a travel history and have a procedure in place to handle a potential Ebola patient.

We must have a strict policy in place for what to do with contaminated waste. Isolating individual is useless if infected waste remains to expose an additional group of individuals. A rapid response team must be available whenever and wherever a potential outbreak has appeared.

Continued work on vaccines, and medications needs to be accelerated with the usual bureaucratic red tape eliminated. The usual double blind studies need to be bypassed in the hopes of treating the greatest number of patients in the shortest time.

Resources need to be unified globally to help West Africa. By helping West Africa we are helping humanity rid itself of this modern day plague.

It should be remembered that if this disease breaks out to other countries without a significant healthcare system but a crowded populace (i.e. India or China, Pakistan) it may be too late. Isolating the US from the world may still be possible in such circumstances but in these days of a global economy, it will be catastrophic. Therefore, W. Africa needs our help and our support in this time of world isolation and quarantine.

This is not difficult. It can be instituted today. Please, let's act before it's too late.