

American University of Beirut Announcement



October 20, 2014

Dear Members of the AUB Community,

You will know from news reports that the Ebola virus has been diagnosed in thousands of cases in West Africa (Senegal, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Nigeria and Congo/DRC). **So far no cases have been reported in Lebanon.**

The Ebola virus has been shown to spread between people who are in close contact with body fluids (stool, vomit, blood, urine, saliva, semen, breast milk) of a sick person or deceased person's body or with surfaces contaminated by infected fluids. Symptoms may appear anywhere from 2 to 21 days after exposure to Ebola, but the average is 8 to 10 days.

The symptoms are mainly:

- Fever (greater than 37.5°C)
- Severe headache
- Muscle pain
- Weakness
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Abdominal (stomach) pain
- Unexplained hemorrhage (bleeding or bruising)

The current Ebola risk in Lebanon remains very low. However, the rapidly evolving situation of this virus highlights the need to be prepared.

In Lebanon, the Ministry Of Health (MOH) has assigned the Rafic Hariri University Hospital as the designated center to receive any potential Ebola cases, if they appear, and is working closely with AUBMC in its efforts. The MOH has also established a screening protocol at the airport for travelers returning from the affected countries. However, every hospital might potentially encounter suspected cases.

AUBMC is putting in place a comprehensive preparedness plan to treat potential Ebola patients if they present to our facility. A multidisciplinary taskforce has been working to address all aspects related to screening for the disease and planning the care for such patients if identified. An Ebola response team has been established. A rigorous screening protocol has been put in place in collaboration with the Emergency Department, Private Clinics, University Health Services, and the Infection Control and Prevention Program as per the guidelines of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The location of an appropriate isolation area will soon be finalized, and any suspected cases coming through clinics or the Emergency Department will be referred to this area. The ability to quickly identify a potential "at risk" patient and move him/her into the controlled area is critical in maintaining the integrity of the process.

It has been shown that the diagnosis of the Ebola virus can be controlled when appropriate scientific measures are combined with community awareness. Nigeria has recently declared its outbreak at an end, and in the United States fifty individuals who may have been exposed to an Ebola victim in Dallas have been released from quarantine.

AUBMC is taking all of the measures needed to ensure the health and safety of its staff, patients and community, which remain our highest priorities. We will keep you informed of our progress.

Should you have any questions related to our preparedness, please contact the Infection Control Program at extension: 6700 or 6702.

For questions about your health as healthcare workers, please contact University Health Services at extension: 3015.

For information about the Ebola virus and latest updates; please refer to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control website: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/>

Peter Dorman, President
and

Mohamed H. Sayegh, Vice President for Medical Affairs and Dean, Faculty of Medicine