

WHAT CAUSES EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE?

Views from villages in Kakua and Badjia
chiefdoms, Bo District, Sierra Leone

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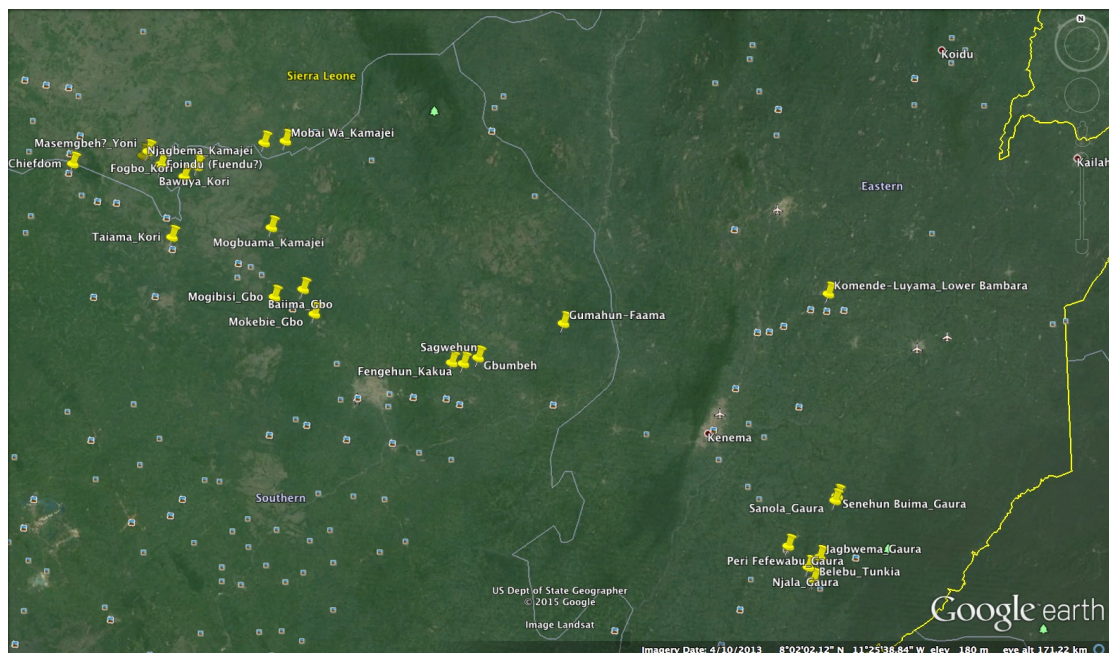
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OVERVIEW

This report provides results from the Ebola questionnaire survey to two questions posed to villagers - *What do you understand to be the causes of this sickness [EVD]?* and *What is your own idea about how this disease [EVD] spreads?* Questions that villagers posed to survey teams are also listed. Data are supplied for four villages in Bo District (Fig 1). Fengehun, Sagwehun and Gbumbeh are three adjacent villages in Kakua chiefdom. None of the three villages had Ebola cases. The fourth village, Gumahun-Faama lies about 10 miles to the NE, and experienced an Ebola outbreak. Between 25 and 30 adults, equally divided by gender, were randomly sampled for interview in each village.

The results are consistent with data presented in previous reports. Bush meat is cited in two-thirds of all responses to the first question but drops to about 5 per cent in answers to the second question. Answers to the second question focus on body fluids, nursing the sick and washing corpses as major infection pathways. The true risks posed by Ebola are widely understood. There is no obvious difference in answers given in the three villages with only indirect experience of Ebola and the one village where there was an Ebola outbreak. Where there is a difference between those with and without direct experience of Ebola is in the pointedness and cogency of the questions asked to the team. In the Ebola-affected village specific and challenging questions were asked about the procedures of the burial team. The problems of quarantine were also emphasized. It was claimed quarantine had had a direct and damaging impact on the harvest. There were also complaints (one from a survivor) that frequent visits by outside teams had not yet resulted in concrete help.

Fig. 1: Location of four villages in eastern Bo District



What do you understand to be the causes of this sickness [EVD]?

Eating of bush meat (bats, monkeys, chimpanzee).

Eating of bush meat (bats, monkeys, chimpanzee).

Eating of bush animals (bats, monkeys, chimpanzee).

Eating of bush animals (bats, monkeys, chimpanzee).

Eating of bush animals (chimpanzee, bats, monkeys).

Hosting of infected persons, **eating of bush animals**.

I don't know the cause but you can have it if you are destined by God to get it.

Eating of bush animals.

Touching of infected persons.

Through body contact with infected persons.

Eating of bush animals (bats, monkeys).

Eating of bush animals.

Contact with infected persons, **eating of bush meat** (monkeys, chimpanzee, bats).

Eating of bush animals (monkeys, chimpanzee, bats), body-to-body contact.

Eating of bush animals (monkeys, chimpanzee, bats).

Accommodating of strangers, shaking of hands with others, visiting homes.

Body-to-body contact, **eating of bush animals** (monkeys, bats) and eating of fruits partly eaten by animals.

Eating of bush animals, caring for the sick, body contact with people.

Touching the sick, washing corpses, playing with body fluids from infected persons.

Touching and washing the dead, body-to-body contact .

Through body contact with infected persons, **eating of bush meat** (bats, monkeys) and fruits partly eaten by animals.

Through body contact and fluids of infected persons, contacted with infected animals.

Body contact with infected persons, from bush animals.

Through body-to-body contact with infected persons, **eating of bush meat** (bats, monkeys).

Body contact with infected persons, from animals that are infected (bats, monkeys).

Eating of bush meat (bats, monkeys, chimpanzee), touching of sick/dead persons.

Eating of bush meat (monkeys, bats, chimpanzees), sex with infected persons.

Touching of infected persons.

Accommodating of strangers with status you do not know, touching and washing of corpses.

Eating of bush meat (monkeys, bats, chimpanzees).

Bush meat = 19/30

What is your own idea about how this disease [EVD] spreads?

- Through contact with body fluids of others.
- Touching of the sick [vomit] and body fluids of others.
- Through body-to-body contact and contact with infected persons.
- Through body-to-body contact, washing corpses of infected persons.
- Touching of infected persons, body fluids from other people, sex.
- Through body-to-body contact.
- Through body fluids of others and body contact.
- Through body-to-body contact, washing corpses of infected persons.
- Through body-to-body contact.
- Through body-to-body contact.
- Through infected persons moving from one place to another, public gatherings.
- Free movement of people from place to place, not adhering to the bye-laws of government on Ebola.
- Movement of people from place to place, violating of bye-laws on Ebola.
- Touching of infected persons, frequent movement of people from one place to another.
- Violating bye-laws on Ebola.
- Touching of infected persons, playing [with?] and washing of corpses.
- Through body-to-body contact, exchanging of materials with infected persons.
- Touching and playing with body fluids of infected persons, through sex.
- Touching and eating with infected persons, washing of the sick and dead.
- Touching and shaking of hands, eating of food partly eaten by animals.
- Not adhering to Ebola bye-laws, keeping the sick at home, washing of corpses.
- Denial of the fact that Ebola is real, not adhering to the laws of government, body-to-body contact.
- Through body-to-body contact, keeping of sick persons at home, **eating of bush meat.**
- Through body-to-body contact, not complying with the laws of government.
- Through body-to-body contact, keeping of sick persons at home, washing of corpses, not complying with the bye-laws on Ebola.
- Touching of infected persons, touching of corpses.
- Through body-to-body contact (shaking of hands).
- Movement of people from one place to another, through body contact (shaking of hands).
- Through body contact with strangers or persons even in the village, sleeping with an infected person, contact with body fluids from infected person.
- Touching of infected persons, having direct contact with dead bodies.

Bush meat = 1/30

Questions from villagers

2. **What can people do to protect themselves from Ebola?**

3. This sickness is caused by bush animals, if this sickness is totally eradicated, what will happen to the bush animals?

5. **How long will it take for this disease to be eradicated?**

12. We pray that this sickness will be eradicated soonest as it has stopped our movements, no schooling and all. We are so confused about how things are unfolding.

13. I thank you for remembering us and coming to [inform] us.

14. We are totally devastated in this village, as our movements have been stopped for the past eight months because of Ebola. We pray that it ends soon.

15. Thank you very much for this interview, [we] hope everything will be fine.

16. We are praying for the speedy eradication of this deadly disease, those infected and those that have passed on. We want government to support us, as we are now vulnerable, **we also want you to help us with medicines for rats as they have been too destructive of our crops, especially the rice.**

17. Is there any cure for Ebola or any medicine apart from the advice given?

18. **When will schools be opened and people have freedom to move from one place to another? (2) if Ebola is declared free in Sierra Leone, how are those living in the interior be informed? (3) let the government find measures to end Ebola in Sierra Leone.**

19. Is it true that government paid because of Ebola in Sierra Leone? (2) how will Ebola be eradicated in Sierra Leone?

26. I want to know **if there is any medicine for Ebola?**

27. We can do nothing in our power to end this sickness so we are asking government to please try to eradicate this disease.

29. We are encouraging all to adhere to the bye-laws for the speedy eradication of this Ebola disease. We want government to work hard in bringing this disease to a speedy conclusion.

30. **We want government to help the needy especially the widows.**

31. We want government to do all in their power to eradicate this disease, help rehabilitate our roads, provide trained and qualified medical persons for our health center, help our children with school charges when school re-opens. (2) we have been seriously devastated because of Ebola; rampant teenage pregnancy, economic drought, etc.; we need help.

What do you understand to be the causes of this sickness [EVD]?

Through body-to-body contact and air.

Through body-to-body contact, **eating of bush animals**.

Through body contact with infected persons.

Eating of bush animals, body contact with infected persons.

Eating of bush animals (monkeys, bats, chimpanzee, etc..)

Eating of bush meat.

From God Almighty.

Eating of bush animals, virus.

Eating of bush meat.

Through body-to-body contact, eating fruits partly eaten by bats.

Eating of food partly eaten by bats, attending the sick, washing of corpses.

Touching of infected persons, washing of corpses.

Eating of bush animals (monkeys, bats, chimpanzee, chimpanzees, etc..), touching and playing with sick persons.

Accommodating of strangers, washing of corpses, uncleanliness.

Though contact with infected persons/animals.

Eating of bush meat, contact with infected persons.

Contact with infected persons, **eating of bush meat** (monkeys, bats, chimpanzee) and fruits partly eaten by animals.

Eating of infected animals and contact with infected persons.

Contact with infected persons, **eating of bush meat** (monkeys, bats, chimpanzee, chimpanzees, etc..) and fruits partly eaten by animals.

Eating of bush animals (chimpanzee, bats, monkeys, etc..).

Eating of bush animals (chimpanzee, bats, monkeys, etc..).

Eating of bush animals (chimpanzee, bats, monkeys, etc..).

According to radio, by eating of bush animals (chimpanzee, monkeys, bats).

Eating of bush animals (monkeys, bats, chimpanzee).

Eating of bush animals (monkeys, bats, chimpanzee).

Through social/public gatherings, washing of corpses, body-to-body contact (hand shaking).

Touching corpses of infected persons, **eating of bush meat** (bats, monkeys, chimpanzees).

Through body-to-body contact: touching, hand shaking, contact with body fluids from infected or dead persons.

Bush meat = 18/28

What is your own idea about how this disease [EVD] spreads?

- Through body contact with infected persons.
- Through body-to-body contact, washing of corpses.
- Through body-to-body contact.
- Through body contact with infected persons.
- Through body-to-body contact, public gatherings.
- Through contact with infected persons, touching and washing of corpses.
- Through body contact (public gathering and shaking of hands).
- Through body contact (shaking of hands), washing of corpses.
- Through body-to-body contact, washing of corpses.
- Through sex and exchanging of materials.
- Through contact with body fluids from infected persons, body-to-body contact.
- Through body-to-body contact, washing corpses with naked hands.
- Through accommodating of strangers, no body contact (shaking of hands).
- Through attending to the sick, body-to-body contact (hand shaking).
- Through body-to-body contact, contact with body fluids from infected persons.
- Through body-to-body contact, eating food partly eaten by animals.
- Through body-to-body contact, eating of infected animals.
- Through body-to-body contact, eating of fruits partly eaten by animals.
- Through body-to-body contact, eating of infected animals, contact with body fluids from infected persons.
- Free movements of people from one place to another.
- Frequent movement of infected persons from one place to another.
- Movement of infected persons to uninfected areas.
- Not adhering to bye-laws on Ebola.
- Movement of infected persons to uninfected areas.
- Washing of corpses.
- Through public gatherings, washing of corpses.
- Eating of bush animals**, touching and washing of corpses.
- Touching of sick person and washing of corpses.

Bush meat = 1/28

Questions from villagers

1. **I want to know why the delay with the burial team (they don't act immediately when called upon)?**
2. I want to know why the delay with the burial team (they don't act immediately when called upon)? (2) **why is it that donors send money instead of drugs?**
6. What can people do to [protect] themselves from Ebola?
10. **If someone follows the bye-laws of Ebola, will they be safe/protected?**
19. **Why is the burial team not too active?**
20. What is the essence and benefits of this activity?
24. We want the donor agencies to try hard and get a drug or vaccine for Ebola, we want to know when will Ebola end as we are greatly disturbed?

What do you understand to be the causes of this sickness [EVD]?

Don't know.

Eating of bush meat (bats, monkeys, chimpanzee, etc.).

Eating of bush meat (bats, monkeys, chimpanzee, pigs, etc.).

Eating of bush animals (chimpanzee, monkeys, bats, etc.).

Poor sanitation, **eating of bush animals** (chimpanzee, monkeys, bats, etc.), eating of fruits partly eaten by birds.

Eating of bush animals (chimpanzee, monkeys, bats, etc.).

From God.

Not adhering to the bye-laws of Ebola.

Eating of bush animals (chimpanzee, monkeys, bats, chimpanzees, etc.).

Eating of unclean food, shaking of hands with people.

Eating of bush meat, body-to-body contact.

Body contact with infected persons, from infected animals.

Body-to-body contact, **eating of bush meat** and fruits partly eaten by bats.

No answer

Eating of bush meat and fruits partly eaten by animals, body-to-body contact.

Eating of bush animals, washing corpses of infected persons.

Eating of bush animals.

Eating of bush animals.

Through body contact with infected persons.

Eating of bush meat.

Eating of bush animals, contact with infected persons.

Eating of bush animals (bats, monkeys, chimpanzees, etc.), washing of corpses.

Eating of bush meat (bats, monkeys, chimpanzees, etc.) and dead animals, body-to-body contact.

Eating of bush meat (bats, monkeys, chimpanzees, etc.).

Eating of bush meat (bats, monkeys, chimpanzees, etc.), touching an infected person, washing of corpses.

Don't know

Don't know.

Don't know

Eating bush meat like monkeys and chimpanzee, unclean environment, hand shaking

Eating bush animals that are dead. Touching the sick

Bush meat = 21/30

What is your own idea about how this disease [EVD] spreads?

Touching infected persons, washing corpses.

Touching infected persons, washing corpses.

Through accommodating of strangers.

Free movements of people (strangers) especially infected persons from one place to another.

Free movements of people from one place to another, not adhering to the bye-laws of Ebola.

Free movements of people from one place to another, not adhering to the bye-laws of Ebola, accommodating strangers.

Free movements of people from one place to another, not adhering to the bye-laws of Ebola.

Touching corpses with bare hands, attending to sick persons.

Through body contact and burying the dead.

Through contact with infected persons, hand shaking with others, washing of corpses.

Denial of the fact that Ebola is real.

Not adhering to the bye-laws of Ebola.

Not adhering to the bye-laws of Ebola.

Not adhering to the bye-laws of Ebola.

Not adhering to the bye-laws of Ebola, body-to-body contact.

Through body-to-body contact.

Through body-to-body contact.

Washing corpses of infected persons.

Through body-to-body contact.

Through body-to-body contact.

Through touching, washing and burying of infected persons.

Through sex with strangers, washing of corpses.

Through sex with strangers, touching of corpses, visiting an infected person.

Eating of bush animals (bats, monkeys, chimpanzees etc.), touching of corpses.

Eating of bush animals (bats, monkeys, chimpanzees etc.), washing of corpses.

Touching dead bodies, **eating bush meat**

No answer

Body contact, washing of dead bodies

Hand shaking, travelling with the infected

Hand shaking. Touching dead bodies

Bush meat = 3/30

Questions from villagers

4. What is this interview all about? (2) what is your own view about Ebola? (3) why do you ask if I have children from other villages/towns for caring? (4) to [know?] more about this sickness as I have told you mine.
7. What is this interview all about without any rewards?
8. What has Ebola got to do with bush animals that we are allowed not to eat them at all?
9. How will someone contract Ebola?
10. If someone is sick with no signs and symptoms of Ebola, are we to attend them or not? (2) is there any curative drug for Ebola?
11. Why is it that our doctors are dying of Ebola? (2) do you have medicine for Ebola?
18. Why have doctors not yet discovered drugs for this disease?
19. Why did the burial team train people from this chiefdom to bury their own people? (2) why are the burial team burying corpses without testing them for Ebola?
20. If we adhere to all the rules by health workers, will Ebola end?
29. Is the date getting closer to lift Ebola out of Sierra Leone?
30. Why have symptoms of Ebola become too many, but they [are] also familiar in [other] diseases within the community?

What do you understand to be the causes of this sickness [EVD]?

Through body-to-body contact, **eating of bush animals**.

Through body-to-body contact, air borne.

Through body-to-body contact, **eating of bush animals**.

Eating of bush animals.

Eating of bush animals.

From God.

Eating of bush animals.

Eating of bush animals.

Eating of bush animals (bats, monkeys, baboons), defiance with bye-laws on Ebola.

Eating of bush animals (bats, monkeys, baboons).

Eating of bush meat (baboons, monkeys, bats).

No answer

Body contact with infected persons, **eating of bush animals** (monkey, baboons, chimpanzees).

Body contact with infected persons, **eating of bush meat** and fruits partly eaten by bats.

Eating of bush meat, touching of body fluids of an infected person.

Eating of bush meat, touching of sick persons and corpses, body-to-body contact.

Eating of bush animals (bats, monkeys), hand shaking with infected persons.

Washing of corpses, body contact with infected persons.

Body-to-body contact, **eating of bush animals** (bats, chimpanzees).

Eating of bush meat, attending the sick, washing of corpses, shaking of hands with people.

Malaria.

Casual sex with someone with whose status you do not know, washing of corpses, touching corpses of Ebola victims.

Through body-to-body contact, travelling a lot to different places.

Eating of bush animals (bats, monkeys, baboons).

Eating of bush animals (monkeys, bats, baboons), eating of fruits partly eaten by bats.

Bush meat = 18/25

What is your own idea about how this disease [EVD] spreads?

Through body contact with infected persons.

Through body-to-body contact.

Touching an infected person.

Through body-to-body contact, washing of infected corpses.

Through body contact with infected persons, washing of corpses.

No answer

Touching infected persons, washing of corpses.

Touching infected persons, touching of corpses.

Free movement of people to infected areas, defying the bye-laws on Ebola.

Defying of the bye-laws on Ebola, movement of infected persons to non-infected places.

Free movement of people from one place to another, washing of corpses and burying them.

Free movement of people from one place to another.

Through body contact with infected persons/animals.

Through contact with body fluids from infected persons.

Through body contact with infected persons, **eating of bush meat.**

Through body-to-body contact.

Washing of corpses, body contact with infected persons, through sex.

Through body contact with infected persons, eating fruits partly eaten by animals.

Through body contact with infected persons, **eating of bush animals** (bats, monkeys).

Through body-to-body contact, eating of fruits partly eaten by animals, washing of corpses.

Touching an infected person.

Through body-to-body contact, burying of Ebola victims.

Caring for infected persons, washing of corpses.

Washing of corpses, shaking of hands with people.

Through stubbornness.

Bush meat = 2/25

Questions from villagers

1. **As the chiefs, we are really working hard to enforce the bye-laws on Ebola but we have never received a token, why?**
2. **Why is it that the burial team puts the corpses in a body bag before burial? (2) why is it that when a person is infected, the ambulance only takes the infected person without any family member to be with them? (3) why is it that they quarantined a village with supplying them food?**
4. **Why is it that the burial team do not dress the deceased with the white cloth before burial?**
9. **We want every Sierra Leonean to obey the bye-laws on Ebola. Our village is one of the infected villages, all our agricultural inputs were not harvested because our village was quarantined. During our quarantined period, everyday we receive visitors taking names and information, etc., what help have you people for us?**
10. **I am one of the Ebola survivors, you have asked many questions, what will be our expectation thereafter?**
11. **We are really frustrated about our children, especially the girls, no schooling, etc.**
12. **We want government to take all measures to see that the disease is eradicated and our children start schooling again.**
14. **I want to know whether the government will supply us or not since we are under quarantine?**
17. **Can DFID provide help for us since we are under quarantine?**
20. **If a sick person dies in my home or pregnant woman dies in the community, what will I do? (2) if my relative falls from the top of a palm tree, what will I do when they say we should not touch the sick?**