

A Ray of Hope In the Ebola Scare

The 2014 Ebola Outbreak has become the worst Ebola outbreaks in history, effecting vast regions of Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia. According to an October 29th statement from the World Health Organization, 3,792 cases have been documented so far, although Since the initial outbreak, 2 cases including one death have been reported in the United States.

Ebola is a virus that is transmitted through direct contact, blood or any other secreted bodily fluids. Coughing and sneezing has not been proven to be an effective method of spreading the virus, however, in most cases, the Ebola sufferer will secrete copious amounts of bodily fluids via bleeding, projectile vomiting and diarrhea. Coming in contact with any of those fluids risks contamination and contraction of the disease.

Ebola's incubation period is also tricky — symptoms can appear anywhere between 3 and 21 days after exposure, making tracking the virus back to patient zero extremely difficult for the World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control in the United States.

Because of the nature of spreading the Ebola virus, medical practitioners are particularly at risk for contracting this deadly disease due to their constant close contact with patients. A patient infected with Ebola may come into a hospital for a simple cough or cold, get checked out by multiple medical staff and potentially contaminate a large number of patients and workers before it is ever realized that the patient has Ebola.

Teresa Romero, a 44 year old nurse from Spain who cared for two Spanish missionary workers who contracted the disease including priest Manuel Garcia Viejo was just one of those medical practitioners.

Teresa has since become Spain's most high-profile Ebola patient, her deteriorating condition being the subject of constant news updates and concern. Her condition was made worse by her weak lungs from years of smoking. Teresa was treated with blood plasma from an Ebola survivor, in hopes of replicating antibodies to fight the virus. The treatment's success is unclear, however, a series of articles published today stated that Teresa's condition has improved, and the most recent one stated that she is scheduled to be released from the hospital tomorrow, Wednesday, November 5th.

In Teresa Romero's case, swift action and early detection may have saved her life. Remember, it is not the virus itself but the symptoms such as the severe fever and loss of fluids that can kill an Ebola patient. Especially for nurse, early detection, swift action, isolation, and emergency care can tremendously improve a patient's chances for survival.

