

Was Ebola Weaponized? Outbreak Caused by New, Potentially Much More Lethal Strain

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Noted infectious disease experts have said that the current strain of Ebola virus plaguing Africa and slowly spreading in the United States is potentially much more lethal than previous strains identified by virologists.

As reported by *Washington's Blog*, Dr. Michael Osterholm, the head of the Center for Infection Disease Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota, a prominent public health researcher who is nationally recognized, gave a talk in recent days explaining what another top Ebola virologist has found.

During his talk, which was broadcast on C-SPAN, Osterholm said Gary Kobinger, chief of Special Pathogens for Canada's national health agency, has said the current Ebola strain appears to be far worse than any previous strain. He added that Kobinger believes that the current strain could more easily be spread through aerosols than those previously identified as well.

"Today I've been given permission — something I've known about for a few weeks... when I wrote the piece, I knew about this, and it's concerned me greatly," said Osterholm, in discussing an article that he previously wrote on the issue with an audience at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, in a video clip that can be seen [here](#).

'It is very worrisome to me'

"Gary Kobinger and colleagues at Winnipeg — the Canadian National Lab — actually took one of the [Ebola] strains from Guinea and put it into macaques [monkeys]," in early September, he said. "What they saw was remarkable. It was unlike any of the [Ebola](#) viruses they've seen in monkeys. It was much, much more severe; the pathology in the lungs was remarkable, and, as Gary said — who is one of the most prominent Ebola virologists in the world — said, 'It is very worrisome to me, about what I saw there.' Maybe this is a different [virus](#)."

Osterholm said he was not trying to scare anyone or raise undue fears, but rather, he said, the goal was to motivate policymakers to come up with a "Plan B" should the virus, at some point, mutate and become airborne, like the common influenza virus — a huge deal, now that flu season is once again around the corner.

Just a week earlier, another top virologist, Peter Jahrling, chief scientist at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, where he runs the emerging viral pathogens section, said he, too, is worried because "the mutations of the virus that are circulating now

look to be more contagious than the ones that have turned up in the past,” Vox reported.

“When his team has run tests on patients in Liberia, they seem to carry a much higher ‘viral load.’ In other words, Ebola victims today have more of the virus in their blood — and that could make them more contagious,” the site reported.

It is largely forgotten now except within the virology community, but in April, a few months after the [outbreak](#) began in West Africa, a group of 30 scientists and researchers published a report in the *New England Journal of Medicine* which said that the current strain of the virus did not come from Central Africa but was instead a new strain.

‘How did it get there?’

As *Reuters* reported at the time:

Ebola is endemic to Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, South Sudan and Gabon, and scientists initially believed that Central Africa’s Zaire strain of the virus was responsible for the outbreak.

Using analysis of blood samples from infected patients, however, researchers determined that while the Guinean form of the Ebola virus (EBOV) showed a 97 percent similarity to the Zaire strain, the disease was not introduced from Central Africa.

Syndicated columnist, author and former Reagan Administration Treasury official Paul Craig Roberts believes that the Obama Administration’s response — sending 4,000 US troops to virus-ravaged West Africa though they have no specific infectious disease training — is “peculiar.” He goes on to speculate that perhaps the administration might be using troops to test an experimental Ebola vaccine. And he further writes:

University of Illinois law professor Francis Boyle, an expert of the perfidies of the US government, reminds us that Sierra Leone and Liberia, the countries most affected by the ebola outbreak, are two West African countries that host US [biological warfare](#) laboratories. Professor Boyle asks how the disease, which is mainly associated with equatorial Congo reached West Africa thousands of kilometers away.

It’s a worthy question, given the evidence and findings that the current strain did not originate where the last strain originated.

Learn all these details and more at the FREE online Pandemic Preparedness course at www.BioDefense.com

Sources:

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