

# Liberia: 45 New Ebola Cases Caused Daily by Patients Being Turned Away by Overwhelmed Volunteers

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The collapse of Liberia's healthcare system due to the Ebola crisis is spurring as many as 45 new cases of the illness daily, according to new data. Researchers from the UK figure that each patient turned away from already full clinics is inadvertently spreading the disease to 1.5 other people, a rate of reproduction that could result in a full-on "nightmare doomsday scenario."

According to the medical charity *Medecins Sans Frontieres*, also known as Doctors Without Borders in English, treatment centers in the Liberian capital of Monrovia are now so overwhelmed with patients that they are having to turn away roughly 30 people daily. Based on a reproduction rate of 1.5, this translates into a daily infection rate of about 45 people.

Joining a chorus of others in the international community, Professor John Edmunds, an epidemiologist from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, says a massive increase in foreign aid is necessary to prevent what he says could have an "apocalyptic" impact on Liberia and its neighbors in the coming months.

Echoing what Liberia's own president said during a recent press conference, the spread of Ebola throughout West Africa is reaching a point of exponential growth in which it will be nearly impossible to contain it. If more beds aren't brought to these countries to treat and quarantine infected patients, in other words, the rate of disease spread will skyrocket.

"It could get very bad indeed," stated Prof. Edmunds. "The doubling time of this epidemic is about two weeks, so if we are overwhelmed with our resources right now, it's going to be twice as bad in two weeks' time."

## **Scientific calculations predict number of Ebola cases will start doubling every two weeks at current rates**

Early on in the outbreak, the number of confirmed cases of Ebola was relatively small, and it appeared that the rate of spread was also small. Charts mapping deaths from the disease showed that it was actually starting to fizzle out in April, only to quickly start picking up in early May and June.

Fast forward a few months and we are now approaching a point of no return where containing the disease will be almost impossible. A recent study out of Arizona State University (ASU) found that the rate of reproduction — that is, the average number of

people infected by a single disease source — has increased in both Sierra Leone and Liberia from 1.4 to 1.7 for each existing case.

What this suggests is that the region is teetering on the brink of an [Ebola](#) explosion, with the number of disease cases rapidly increasing. The number of cases is doubling every few weeks, which means it is a very real possibility that in just a few months millions of people could become infected.

“Based on the durations of incubation and infectiousness of EVD [Ebola virus disease], it is plausible that the number of [cases](#) could therefore double every fortnight [two weeks] if the situation does not change,” explains an editorial published in *Eurosurveillance*.

“There are currently hundreds of new EVD cases reported each week; with the number of infections increasing exponentially, it could soon be thousands.”

**Sources for this article include:**

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