

 **the**  
**Commonwealth Nurse**

JOURNAL OF THE COMMONWEALTH NURSES AND MIDWIVES FEDERATION

Issue 52 | 2015

<http://www.thecommonwealthnurse.com>



## EBOLA

SIERRA LEONE NURSES AND MIDWIVES RESPOND

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The Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation (CNF), founded in 1973, is a federation of national nursing and midwifery associations in Commonwealth countries.

Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation  
c/o Royal College of Nursing  
20 Cavendish Square W1G 0RN London UK  
Tel: + 61 438 647 252  
Email: [cnf@commonwealthnurses.org](mailto:cnf@commonwealthnurses.org)  
Website: <http://www.commonwealthnurses.org>

ISSN 2054-1767  
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Published by the Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation

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**Ramziah Binti Ahmad**  
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This issue of the Commonwealth Nurse is dedicated to the health workers in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea. During the crisis, the CNMF was in constant contact with our members in Sierra Leone: Chief Nursing Officer, Ms Hossinatu Mary Kanu and President of the Sierra Leone Nurses Association, Mr Senesie Margao.

Two hundred and ninety six health care workers in Sierra Leone became infected with EVD and 221 died. One hundred and fifty two of them were nurses (2 registered nurses; 3 midwives; 2 nurse anaesthetists; 1 student nurse; 76 enrolled nurses; 33 maternal child health aides; 26 nursing aides; and 9 traditional birth attendants).

The world watched in horror as, at the time of writing this editorial, 28,600 cases were reported with 11,300 deaths. The Sierra Leone Nurses Association, supported by the Sierra Leone Government, travelled the country providing infection prevention education and teaching health workers the correct procedures for the use of personal protective equipment. The CNMF congratulates them warmly for this initiative and their commitment.

The first round of training, funded by the Sierra Leone Ministry of Health and Sanitation, reached 568 nurses and was conducted in: Bo, Kenema, Kailahun, Kono, Bombali, Koinadugu, Kambia, and the Western District of Freetown. During the second round of training, funded by the Commonwealth Foundation, 630 nurses and midwives were trained in Freetown and all twelve districts of Sierra Leone.



In 2012, the CNMF was funded by The Burdett Trust to provide maternal health training in Freetown and another four rural districts in Sierra Leone: Kenema, Bo, Makeni, and the Western District of Freetown. One hundred and forty nurses and midwives undertook the training. Sadly some of those nurses and midwives died during the Ebola epidemic.

Once the immediate crisis is over, there will be many questions to be asked and answered as to how such a virulent virus could cause such devastation unchecked and without any adequate health system, medical, or international response. The article, written by our Sierra Leone colleagues on page four of this journal, asks some of those questions and suggests some answers. But answers are not enough unless the international community works with the affected countries to make sure that such an epidemic can never happen again anywhere in the world.

Other important features in this issue of The Commonwealth Nurse is the United Nations 2015 report of progress toward the Millennium Development Goals for selected targets. Globally, there has been an improvement in the number of people living in extreme poverty from 47% in 1990 to 14% in 2015. The under 5 mortality rate has decreased from 90 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 43 per 1,000 live births in 2015. The maternal mortality rate has declined by 45% since 1990 and the number of births attended by skilled birth attendants increased from 59% in 1990 to 71% in 2015. There was also an increase in the number of household who had access to an improved drinking source from 76% in 1990 to 91% in 2015. There is no doubt that progress has been made. But there is also no doubt that there is still a long way to go.

All nurses and midwives should be familiar with the new proposed Sustainable Development Goals which are outlined on page thirteen. As with the MDGs, the SDGs cannot be achieved without the active participation of nurses and midwives so it is imperative that the nursing and midwifery leadership commences dialogue with the governments of their country and be a part of the planning process, implementation and monitoring.

February 6 was a day to reflect on Female Genital Mutilation, reported on page fourteen. Nurses and midwives must be at the forefront of strategies to address this issue.

And finally, on page fifteen, there is an opportunity to have input into the WHO public consultation on the development of their Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health. Nurses and midwives make up the greatest percentage of the health workforce in every country in the world so it is critical that as many nurses and midwives as possible have their say.

## EBOLA: A nation in crisis

### Ms Hossinatu Mary Kanu

Sierra Leone Chief Nursing Officer and CNMF Board Member for West Africa

### Mr Senesie Margao

President, Sierra Leone Nurses Association

### Ms Jill Iliffe

Executive Secretary, Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation



## INTRODUCTION

At the end of December 2013, a two year old child living in the remote village of Meliandou, Guinea died from a 'mysterious disease'.<sup>1</sup> In March 2014 the Ministry of Health in Guinea reported concerns about the spread of this 'mysterious illness' which was eventually diagnosed and reported on the website of the WHO Regional Office for Africa on 23 March as Ebola Virus Disease (EVD).

By that time, the end of week 11 of the epidemic, there were 86 reported cases in Guinea and 60 deaths.<sup>2</sup> Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) was the first international agency to respond establishing a base in Guinea in March 2014 within four days of the declaration of the epidemic in that country.

By epidemic week 25, on 23 June 2014, MSF warned the world that the epidemic was 'out of control' with 528 cases and 337 deaths being reported across 60 sites in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.<sup>3</sup> However it was not until the end of epidemic week 31, on 9 August 2014, that the WHO declared the Ebola epidemic as a "public health emergency of international concern".<sup>4</sup> By this time there were 1,171 cases and 932 deaths.

The WHO noted that the three countries most affected had fragile health systems with significant deficits in human, financial and material resources, resulting in a compromised ability to mount an adequate Ebola outbreak control response; they were inexperienced in dealing with Ebola outbreaks; there were misperceptions about the disease and how it was transmitted; there was high population mobility across borders; and a high number of infections had been reported among health care workers highlighting inadequate infection control practices.<sup>5</sup>

The international community was already aware the affected countries faced these challenges long before the outbreak of Ebola.

It was not until epidemic week 37, on the 18 September that the United Nations Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 2177 (2014) stating that the "unprecedented extent" of the epidemic "constituted a threat to international peace and security".<sup>6</sup>

Twelve months after the first epidemic was declared in Guinea in March 2014, there have been 24,282 cases and 9,976 deaths, 491 of them health workers<sup>7</sup> and the EVD epidemic in West Africa - in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone - is still not over. Many questions are now being asked the world over as to how and why this situation developed and what can we do to make sure it does not happen again?

## THE INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

In 2010, a WHO review committee was convened to evaluate the response to the 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic and assess the level of global preparedness for similar events in the future. The committee concluded that, "The world is ill-prepared to respond to a severe influenza pandemic or to any similarly global and threatening public health emergency", however in November 2014, four years later, only 64 of the WHO 194 member states were assessed as having the essential surveillance, laboratory capacity, data management, and other health system capacities to respond to a public health emergency.<sup>8</sup>

Having faced the threat of H1N1 in 2009 and knowing in 2014 that at least 130 countries were unprepared for a public health emergency, why was nothing done?

Wilkinson and Leach<sup>9</sup> offer a set of explanations and contend that "structural violence" contributed to the epidemic. They define structural violence as "the way institutions and practices inflict avoidable harm ... damage is done unequally and often in a manner which comes to be taken for granted" (p.1). Wilkins and Leach argue their case within three domains: the failure of outbreak response and global health governance; compromised health systems and development policy; and misleading assumptions and myths.

### Failure of outbreak response and global health governance

Wilkinson and Leach maintain that from the outset, and despite warnings, the international response to Ebola was "disastrously ineffective", lacked leadership, funds, equipment and human resources and that it was an avoidable disaster.

While the WHO comes in for criticism, they point out that essential restructuring following significant budget and staff cuts in 2011 led to a re-focus of WHO priorities on NCDs and a shift to providing technical advice rather than taking responsibility for health as a global public good.

The capacity of the WHO to respond to global health emergencies was also influenced by politicized appointments of staff and poor and disjointed coordination between head office and regional and country offices. WHO themselves see their role as “convener and conduit ... providing information and services and mobilising partners to agree on standards and courses of action” in international health emergencies.<sup>10</sup> The policies of “new players with significantly larger budgets” than the WHO pursuing vertical programs relating to specific diseases such as HIV, tuberculosis and malaria, completely undermined commitments to horizontal health system strengthening.

Additionally, Wilkinson and Leach point out, international donations to the Ebola relief fund of the United Nations were poor from both governments and the private sector. They comment that the need for international governance systems that conceive of health as a properly funded global public good, enabling rapid responses to crises when they do emerge has been undervalued for too long.

### **Compromised health systems and development policy**

A history of political stability, corruption, and civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone left essential infrastructure neglected or destroyed. Wilkinson and Leach note that in the three countries worst affected by EVD, there was a “pervasive” lack of resources, equipment, money, and health workers and what was there was likely to be inappropriate or inadequate.

The structural adjustment programs promoted by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund requiring as a condition of loans that poor countries pursue deregulation, privatisation, market competition and wage suppression; and reduce public spending, government provided services and social spending meant that as a consequence, there were reduced resources for and capacity to strengthen health systems. Health became a commodity and an individual responsibility.<sup>11</sup> Countries relied heavily on donor aid to meet essential health services and were captured by the priorities of the donor rather than the needs of the community. The lack of services led to a loss of confidence in the system by the community who turned to tradition healers and tradition medicine to meet their health needs.<sup>12</sup>

### **Misleading assumptions and myths**

The first misleading assumption on the management of the Ebola epidemic addressed by Wilkinson and Leach was that Ebola could be contained within national borders; that closing borders would be effective for a highly mobile population whose movement patterns reflected not just trade routes but social networks and kinship visits. The response by airlines in cancelling flights to the affected areas of West Africa, which Wilkinson and Leach describe as “hysterical”, made it difficult for the international mobilisation of health workers and essential goods to the area.

The initial response from officials warning people against eating bush-meat was another myth that Wilkinson and Leach maintain was irresponsible in the extreme, depriving people of essential protein and suggesting that Ebola was transmitted animal to human rather than human to human. An opportunity was lost for education on the safe use of bush-meat and honesty about transmission of the virus.

Implementing a centralised treatment model and failing to work with communities was another misleading assumption that cost lives. The distances and the roads made it impossible for sick people to make the journey.

Community education, engagement and cooperation at the local level from the beginning would have done more to halt the spread, identify infected people, and trace contacts.

Working with communities to find solutions for dignified burials, Wilkins and Leach state, would have contributed to a greater understanding of the way the disease spread and allayed fears about the reason for decisions made and the dehumanising personal protective equipment worn by health workers.

### **THE COMMONWEALTH RESPONSE**

The Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation (CNMF) has a close relationship with the Sierra Leone Nurses association (SLNA) who advised the CNMF in late June of the deaths of three nurses from EVD. This was reported in the July 2014 issue of the CNMF e-News.<sup>13</sup> Messages of support from other CNMF members were sent to the SLNA and regular communication and support was established.

Could the CNMF have done more? Yes, of course. An attempt was made by diaspora nursing groups in the United Kingdom to enrol volunteer nurses and midwives from all Commonwealth countries to go to Sierra Leone under the auspices of the UK government.

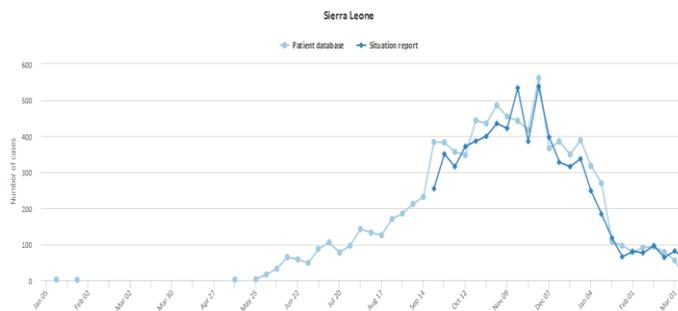
Despite the fact that a positive response was received from nurses in Commonwealth countries outside the UK, the logistics of gaining permission from their own country to travel to Sierra Leone, the implementation of travel restrictions to West Africa, and the uncertainties by the UK program as to how they could ensure the safety of volunteers from other countries, meant that the program was limited to UK nurses only. Putting out a call for individual nurses from Commonwealth countries to donate personal protective equipment to send to Sierra Leone was not a feasible option with flights suspended to the region. Continuing to raise awareness and encouraging nurses to do the same at a national level was considered the only option available but it was grossly insufficient.

On 1 August 2014, the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth issued a brief statement expressing condolences to those whose families and friends had died as a result of the virus; expressing appreciation and encouragement to health workers 'treating the sick at personal risk to themselves'; and commending the response of the international community.<sup>14</sup> On 17 October 2014, the Secretary-General announced that the Commonwealth Secretariat had funded an expert to provide technical assistance in Sierra Leone to the government to prepare Ebola response plans at the local government level.<sup>15</sup> In January 2015, the Commonwealth Secretariat advertised a one year position for a Public Health Management Expert Adviser to be based within the Sierra Leone Ministry of Health and Sanitation to assist with strengthening the Sierra Leone public national health system post-EVD.

Could the Commonwealth Secretariat have done more? Yes of course. All international bodies could have done more. Sierra Leone is a Commonwealth country. The Commonwealth Secretariat should have been at the front, certainly from the end of May when Sierra Leone declared an epidemic, leading the mobilisation of support from the WHO and other international donors instead of waiting until August to make a public statement. The message from front line health workers in Sierra Leone was that they were dying because of a lack of personal protective equipment and a lack of knowledge about correct infection prevention and control procedures.

The Commonwealth Secretariat was in a unique position to mobilise the donation and delivery of personal protective equipment from other Commonwealth countries and to identify and support the delivery of infection prevention and control education and training. They did not use the networks they had; they missed an opportunity to demonstrate Commonwealth values, and they failed the government, the health workers, and the people of Sierra Leone.

## Sierra Leone



Key: Patient database (light blue); Situation report (dark blue)  
January 2014 to March 2015

WHO: <http://apps.who.int/ebola/current-situation/ebola-situation-report-11-march-2015>

Wilkinson and Leach state that it was the inherited inequalities from past policies that allowed a virus like Ebola to devastate three countries in the absence of fundamental public health and state capacities. They remind us that dramatic gains in life expectancy and reductions in the burden of disease come from improved living standards, sanitation, nutrition, prevention, and not from medicine alone but that this is consistently overlooked by international donors looking for a "quick fix" for particular diseases.<sup>16</sup>

The social disruption to families and communities cannot be measured or easily addressed: the death of the person in the family bringing in an income; the death of the mother, homemaker or carer; and children left without parents will push many people into dire poverty and reduce their opportunities to access education or make an economic contribution to their family, community or country. Overcoming the disruption to education, the economy, food supplies, agricultural production, and trade will take time, effort, and resources. Other health priorities which have been neglected while responding to the Ebola crisis will need to be factored into plans for recovery.

Wilkinson and Leach urge that the Ebola epidemic should be a "game changer" for development and that the inequalities that created and deepened the crisis are not sustainable. Rebuilding fragile health systems and states must be accompanied by tackling the inequalities so that health systems can be sustained with a sufficient home-grown health workforce and locally managed resources not just with donated goods and services linked to external priorities.<sup>17</sup>

The global community failed Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone and it will be a tragedy if too little is done to strengthen the fragile health systems in those countries to ensure that what happened in 2014 will not happen again or to prevent another crisis developing in another vulnerable country.



## SIERRA LEONE: A case study

### Ms Hossinatu Mary Kanu

Sierra Leone Chief Nursing Officer and CNMF Board Member for West Africa

### Mr Senesie Margao

President, Sierra Leone Nurses Association

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[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d9/Sierra\\_Leone\\_Districts.png](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d9/Sierra_Leone_Districts.png)

Sierra Leone was declared a British Protectorate in 1896 and on 27 April 1961 became an independent republic. Establishing a stable system of government after independence was difficult and a brutal civil war between 1991 and 2002 left 50,000 people dead and hundreds of thousands traumatised, destroyed infrastructure, delayed education, and disrupted economic development. A decade of relatively stable government did not give Sierra Leone sufficient time to develop resilient health or other systems or to develop or repair country-wide infrastructure that impacts on population health such as access to clean water and appropriate sanitation. For example, in 2014, only 42% of the population of Sierra Leone living in rural areas had access to improved drinking water and only 7% had access to improved sanitation.



It is almost impossible for people to observe strict hand washing procedures when there is no safe water supply or the only safe water is a one tap in the main street which services several thousand people. Electricity supplies are rationed on a daily basis particularly in rural areas which impacts on boiling water to provide safe water and maintain hygiene but also on maintaining communication.

The population of Sierra Leone is around 6 million with a median age in 2014 of 19 years of age; two thirds of the population in 2014 were under the age of 25 years however the literacy rate was only 43%.<sup>1</sup>

Health outcomes in Sierra Leone were already poor although Sierra Leone spends 18.8% of its GDP on health, the second highest in the world.<sup>2</sup> In 2014, life expectancy was 55 years for males and 60 years for females.<sup>3</sup> Sierra Leone has one of the highest rates in the world of under 5 mortality (160.6 per 1,000 live births); infant mortality (170.2 per 1,000 live births); and maternal mortality (1,100 per 1000,000 live births).<sup>4</sup> The density of physicians per 1,000 population in 2010 was 0.022 (by comparison the density in the United Kingdom was 2.79).<sup>5</sup> The density of nurses and midwives per 1,000 population in 2010 was 0.166 (8.826 in the United Kingdom).<sup>6</sup> Nurses comprise around 80% of the health workforce.

Ms Hossinatu Mary Kanu, the Chief Nursing Officer of Sierra Leone attached to the Ministry of Health and Sanitation said that Sierra Leone was not equipped to respond to such a virulent epidemic: the health system was still weak; there were insufficient human and infrastructure resources; there was widespread poverty; and they had only recently emerged from a long period of political instability and a devastating civil war.

The challenges included a limited capacity to provide and maintain a safe practice and care environment in health facilities; inadequate human resources both quantity and quality; maldistribution of the existing health workforce; weak disease surveillance and response systems which were not yet integrated across the country; a poorly developed emergency preparedness plan; inadequate health technologies including medicines, supplies and laboratory services; weak supply chain management; an ineffective referral system; and weak coordination across the country because of inadequate roads, transport and communication.

The most important and basic prevention strategy, hand washing, was infrequently or incorrectly practiced. Health workers had poor knowledge about infectious diseases and EVD in particular. Their knowledge, skill and practices in infection prevention and control were inadequate and there were no national standards or guidelines.

Health workers lacked basic personal protective equipment (impermeable gloves, waterproof boots, goggles, fluid resistant mask or respirator mask, impermeable coveralls and aprons, head cover). Health facilities were poorly and inadequately maintained including water and waste management and wards were overcrowded with limited physical space.

Sierra Leone reported its first laboratory confirmed case of EVD on 25 May 2014 from the Kailahun District located in the eastern region of Sierra Leone near the shared border with Liberia.

The Ministry of Health and Sanitation responded quickly declaring an epidemic, implementing a national response, and seeking external support. Over the next nine months, confirmed cases totalled 11,610 with 3,629 deaths (1 March 2015).<sup>7</sup>

In addition to the external support, guidance, construction of isolation centres, provision of equipment, provision of laboratory services, the Nursing Directorate, with technical support from the WHO, developed guidelines on the use of personal protective equipment and around 1,000 frontline nurses were trained and deployed into Ebola facilities to support the response. A monitoring and supervisory team was formed using personnel from the Nurses and Midwives Board of Sierra Leone to visit all Ebola facilities. One hundred senior nurse supervisors were deployed to all health facilities across the country to monitor, mentor and supervise junior staff.

Two hundred and ninety six health care workers in Sierra Leone became infected with EVD and 221 died; a much higher proportion than in the general community. One hundred and fifty two of them were nurses (2 registered nurses; 3 midwives; 2 nurse anaesthetists; 1 student nurse; 76 enrolled nurses; 33 maternal child health aides; 26 nursing aides; and 9 traditional birth attendants).

Mr Senesie Margao, the President of the Sierra Leone Nurses Association, spoke of the "thin line between care and fear". Nurses were not only concerned for their own health and safety in caring for people infected with EVD but they also experienced hostility from members of the community and often from their own family members concerned the nurses were spreading the infection. Many nurses were afraid to come to work. Many nurses who came to work were not permitted to return to their own homes and communities.

Ebola survivors, those people who tested positive and survived the illness and now testing negative for the virus, also faced discrimination and were frequently refused re-entry into their homes and communities. Certificates were given verifying that they were Ebola free, however often that was not enough.

Watching people suffer and die, watching their colleagues suffer and die, struggling with heavy workloads and inadequate equipment and resources, and fearing for their own safety was a heavy burden for the nurses to bear. Care was provided in an environment of mutual mistrust between patient and health care worker: is this person going to save me; is this person going to infect me.

The Sierra Leone Ministry of Health and Sanitation funded the SLNA to provide infection prevention and control education and training to 568 nurses and other health workers in all 14 districts in Sierra Leone. This took place 14-31 July 2014. The education and training covered:

- Information about EVD especially methods of human-to-human transmission,
- Signs and symptoms and identification of suspected cases,
- Appropriate treatment, management and care,
- Reinforcement of standard precautions and infection prevention and control,
- Practice in the use of personal protective equipment,
- Safe disposal of waste and safe burial, and
- Supportive care for care givers.<sup>8</sup>

Sierra Leone nurses, midwives and other health workers who attended the training identified the challenges they faced as: inadequate personal protective equipment; poor working conditions and environment; inadequate knowledge about EVD prevention and care; lack of isolation materials; poor communication; and delays in obtaining laboratory results. They sought adequate personal protective equipment to keep them safe; ongoing education and training; the necessary resources, including human resources, to be able to provide appropriate and sufficient care; and improved working conditions and environment.<sup>9</sup>

The Commonwealth Foundation has funded the SLNA to provide additional infection and prevention training and has indicated a willingness to work with the SLNA and the Ministry of Health and Sanitation in establishing infection prevention committees in all major health facilities both urban and rural.

Sierra Leone faces significant challenges in the future. The deaths of doctors, nurses, midwives and other health care workers as a result of EVD will require active intervention to rebuild the health workforce. The environment of mistrust between nurses and patients as a consequence of their experience with Ebola has affected the motivation of nurses to continue nursing. Mr Margao said that Sierra Leone needs nurses more than ever, but the number of nurses will make no difference if the system is not there to support them and they are not motivated to nurse and willing to care.

Many people who died are between 30-45 years old. There are families and communities who have lost the majority of their adult members, leaving many orphaned children and elderly people. In some communities there is hardly anyone left to cultivate the fields or provide for the family.<sup>10</sup> Overcoming the disruption to education, the economy, food supplies, agricultural production, and trade will take time, effort, and resources.

The Sierra Leone Ministry of Health and Sanitation has prepared a three-stage recovery and resilience plan for post-Ebola. Five pillars have been formed to address the challenges and gaps in the Ministry:

- Patient and health worker safety,
- Health workforce,
- Essential health services,
- Community ownership, and
- Surveillance and information.

The plan covers early recovery 6-9 months; recovery 2015-2018; resilience 2018-2020. Additionally, a national policy and strategy on infection prevention and control is under development along with standard operating procedures and training manuals. A national infection prevention and control coordinator has been appointed. Twenty five focal points have been appointed at every tertiary and secondary hospital and senior nurse supervisors have been trained alongside international partners and deployed. Plans are underway to incorporate infection prevention and control into all health worker curricula. Meeting infection prevention and control practices through continuing professional development will be a benchmark for the re-licensure of nurses and midwives.

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## EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE (EVD)

Ebola Virus Disease is a severe, often fatal illness. The origin of the virus is unknown however the WHO report that, based on available evidence, fruit bats (Pteropodidae) are considered the likely host of EVD.<sup>1</sup> In areas of Africa, infection has been documented through the handling (blood, secretions, organs and other body fluids) of infected chimpanzees, gorillas, fruit bats, monkeys, forest antelope, and porcupines either alive or dead.<sup>2</sup> In the current outbreak in West Africa, however the majority of cases have occurred as a result of human-to-human transmission. Infection occurs through direct contact of broken skin or mucous membranes with the blood or other body fluids (faeces, urine, saliva, semen, sweat) of infected people. Infection can also occur if broken skin or mucous membrane comes into contact with clothing, bed linen, needles, surfaces etc that have been contaminated with an Ebola patient's infectious secretions or body fluids.<sup>3</sup> There are five different strains of the Ebola virus. The Zaire strain of the Ebola virus was responsible for the outbreak in West Africa.<sup>4</sup>

The signs and symptoms of EVD include sudden onset of fever, intense weakness, muscle pain, headache, and sore throat. These symptoms can be followed by vomiting, diarrhoea, rash, impaired kidney and liver function, and in some cases, both internal and external bleeding (nose bleeds, blood in vomit, blood in bowel motions, bleeding from the conjunctiva and mucous membrane of eyes, nose and mouth).<sup>5</sup>

The incubation period for EVD is from two to 21 days. People are not infectious in the incubation period but become infectious once they start exhibiting symptoms.<sup>6</sup> People are considered free from infection once a blood test for EVD is negative. Recovery from EVD provides immunity to the strain of the virus that caused the infection.<sup>7</sup> The WHO however advise that the EVD virus can be isolated in semen for up to three months post infection and recommend abstinence from sexual activity during that period.<sup>8</sup>

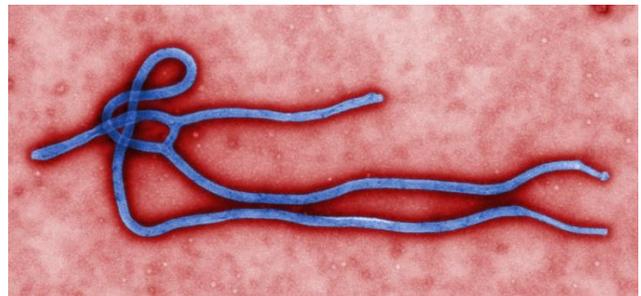
Transmission of the disease can be animal to human or human to human. In the current outbreak in West Africa, human to human transmission was the major mode of transmission. Those most at risk of contracting Ebola are family members or anyone in the community in contact with or caring for an infected person; health workers, and family members, mourners and others involved in the burial of infected persons who have subsequently died. Direct contact with dead bodies, for example at funerals, was one of the main ways the disease was transmitted. Funerals are a significant practice in the communities affected by the outbreak and involve people washing and touching the body, expressing their love for the deceased.

In the last hours before death the virus becomes extremely virulent and therefore the risk of transmission from the dead body is much higher. For these reasons, ensuring safe burials is a crucial part of managing the outbreak.<sup>9</sup> The Ebola virus took advantage of people's basic instincts when caring for an ill family member, that of touch and with the difficulty of transport and access to an appropriate health facility in rural areas, many family and community members were also infected.

There is no specific cure for EVD although several vaccines are under development.<sup>10</sup> Standard treatment is limited to supportive therapy, consisting of maintaining hydration with intravenous fluids or oral rehydration solutions that contain electrolytes; maintaining oxygen status and blood pressure; providing high quality nutrition; and giving antibiotics for any concomitant infections.<sup>11</sup>

The major strategies for managing an EVD outbreak are outlined in the WHO *Ebola Response Roadmap* released 28 August 2014 and include:

- Early identification of infection,
- Isolation until confirmation of infection,
- Confirmation by laboratory testing,
- Appropriate care and treatment including rehydration and strict infection and control and use of personal protective equipment,
- Contact tracing,
- Safe disposal of waste and safe burials,
- Ongoing surveillance, and
- Community education and engagement.<sup>12</sup>



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## LEADERSHIP TRAINING IN BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

The CNMF President, Ms Ramziah Binti Ahmad visited Brunei Darussalam at the invitation of the Brunei Darussalam Nurses Association on 27-28 May 2015 to conduct leadership education and training. One hundred and ten nurses participated in the workshop.



The leadership program had six themes:

- Being a leader.
- Ethical leadership.
- Professional leadership.
- Personal leadership.
- Being an advocate.
- Leading the way.

The program used different teaching modes and learning methods including formal presentations, group work, group activities, and self-reflection. Participants learned that leadership skills can be developed and that practice makes perfect. Nurses and midwives need to grasp every opportunity to take a leadership role. There are various leadership styles such as: autocratic or authoritative; democratic or participative; laissez faire or delegative. Different contexts require different leadership styles. For example, in an emergency, the leader cannot adopt a democratic or laissez faire leadership style but may need to be autocratic or authoritative.

The characteristics of effective leaders are that they are continually learning; they are positive people who serve others; they are informed, creative and believe in their followers; and to be effective they need to lead a balanced life and look after their own physical, spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and social wellbeing.

Leaders must be politically aware; be able to share their vision; be good listeners; be a role model and lead by example; be able to inspire and empower their followers; delegate not abdicate; and facilitate risk taking.

## BECOME A CNMF MEMBER

At the 21<sup>st</sup> CNMF Biennial Meeting of members in March 2014, the membership approved significant changes to the CNMF Constitution. One of the changes was to widen the number of CNMF membership categories.

**Full** membership of the CNMF is now open to national nursing associations and national midwifery associations. **Affiliate** membership is now be open to other national, regional or international nursing or midwifery associations, which may include national nursing and midwifery regulatory authorities, nursing and midwifery educational institutions, or specialist national nursing or midwifery associations (such as mental health, critical care, paediatrics, operating theatre etc). **Associate** membership shall be open to international or regional nursing or midwifery organisations or international, regional or national health related organisations. These organisations may be in the public, private, not-for-profit, non-government, religious or charitable sector and may not necessarily be located in Commonwealth countries. **Individual** membership, 'Friends of the CNMF' is also available and is open to individual nurses or midwives who subscribe to the objects of the CNMF.

By becoming a member of the CNMF, you can support the work of the CNMF and become involved in that work. Members can promote their own work through the monthly e-News, the CNMF website or the extensive CNMF network. You can join online through the CNMF website:

<http://www.commonwealthnurses.org/membership.html>.

Other constitutional changes included the insertion of a clause specifying the way the CNMF must operate:

- to be committed and contribute to the objectives of the CNMF,
- to be an effective and efficient organisation,
- to be responsible in the use of internal and external resources,
- to be inclusive and involve members in decision making,
- to be cooperative and work as a team with members,
- to be consistent, congruent and ethical in decision making and behaviours,
- to respect the human rights of members and other people,
- to avoid discrimination of members or other people,
- to be protective of the privacy and confidentiality needs of members and other people,
- to be tolerant and accepting of members and other people,
- to be open, forthright and have integrity in dealing with members and other people,
- to be flexible, innovative, and determined in order to achieve CNMF objectives,
- to be compliant with relevant legislation and regulation.

# MDG REPORT 2015

The United Nations has released the 2015 report on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The report gives a global overview of what has been achieved for each of the eight MDGs. Results within countries vary considerably and the data is dependent on what is provided by countries or on estimates. It is clear from the report that there is still a great deal to be done.

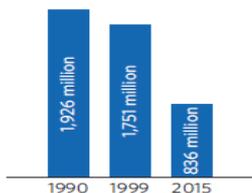
<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/reports.shtml>

## MDG 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Extreme poverty rate in developing countries



Global number of extreme poor



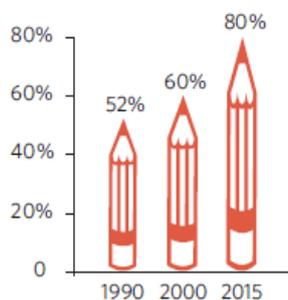
Extreme poverty has declined significantly over the last two decades. In 1990, nearly half of the population in the developing world lived on less than \$1.25 a day; that proportion dropped to 14 per cent in 2015. Globally, the number of people living in extreme poverty has declined by more than half, falling from 1.9 billion in 1990 to 836 million in 2015.

## MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education

Global out-of-school children of primary school age



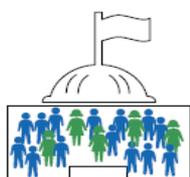
Primary school net enrolment rate in sub-Saharan Africa



The primary school net enrolment rate in the developing regions has reached 91 per cent in 2015, up from 83 per cent in 2000. The number of out-of-school children of primary school age worldwide has fallen by almost half, to an estimated 57 million in 2015, down from 100 million in 2000. Sub-Saharan Africa has had the best record of improvement in primary education of any region since the MDGs were

## MDG 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

90% of countries have more women in parliament since 1995



Many more girls are now in school compared to 15 years ago. The developing regions as a whole have achieved the target to eliminate gender disparity in primary, secondary and tertiary education. Still only one in five women are members of parliament.

## MDG4: Reduce child mortality

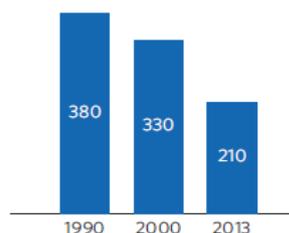
Global number of deaths of children under five



Despite population growth in the developing regions, the global under-five mortality rate has declined by more than half, dropping from 90 to 43 deaths per 1,000 live births between 1990 and 2015.

## MDG 5: Improve maternal health

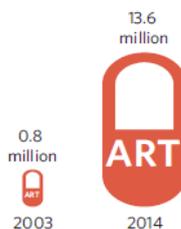
Global maternal mortality ratio (deaths per 100,000 live births)



Since 1990, the maternal mortality ratio has declined by 45 per cent worldwide, and most of the reduction has occurred since 2000. More than 71 per cent of births were assisted by skilled health personnel globally in 2014, an increase from 59 per cent in 1990.

## MDG 6: Combat HIV, AIDS, malaria and other diseases

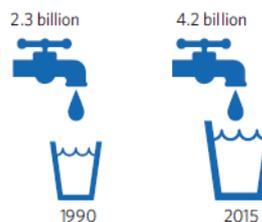
Global antiretroviral therapy treatment



New HIV infections fell by approximately 40 per cent between 2000 and 2013. The global malaria incidence rate has fallen by an estimated 37 per cent and the mortality rate by 58 per cent. The tuberculosis mortality rate fell by 45 per cent and the prevalence rate by 41 per cent between 1990 and 2013.

## MDG 7: Ensure environmental sustainability

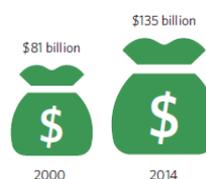
1.9 billion people have gained access to piped drinking water since 1990



In 2015, 91 per cent of the global population is using an improved drinking water source, compared to 76 per cent in 1990. Of the 2.6 billion people who have gained access to improved drinking water since 1990, access to piped drinking water on premises. Over half of the global population (58 per cent) gained access to piped drinking water on premises.

## MDG 8: Develop a global partnership for development

Official development assistance



Between 2000 and 2014, official development assistance from developed countries increased by 66 per cent in real terms. In 2015, 95 per cent of the world's population is covered by a mobile phone signal and internet penetration has grown from just over 6 per cent of the world's population in 2000 to 43 per cent.

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

This year, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) launched by the United Nations in 2000 will come to an end. In September 2015, the United Nations will release their development goals for the next 15 years (to 2030) titled the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). There are at present, 17 SDGs, each with a set of targets. The 17 SDGs are:

- Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
- Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
- Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
- Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
- Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
- Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
- Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.
- Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
- Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.
- Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries.
- Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
- Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
- Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
- Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

- Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.
- Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
- Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.



The development of the Sustainable Development Goals has been the result of a comprehensive consultation process conducted by the United Nations over a period of two years. While the Goals themselves appear to have been agreed, there is still opportunity for input into the targets. For more information go to:

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgsproposa>

## ZERO TOLERANCE FOR FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is held on 6 February. FGM comprises all procedures that involve altering or injuring the female genitalia for non-medical reasons, and is recognized internationally as a violation of the human rights of girls and women. FGM constitutes an extreme form of discrimination against women and girls and reflects deep-rooted inequality between the sexes. The practice also violates the rights of women and girls to health, security and physical integrity, their right to be free from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and their right to life when the procedure results in death.

- Globally, it is estimated that at least 200 million girls and women alive today have undergone some form of FGM.
- Girls 14 and younger represent 44 million of those who have been cut, with the highest prevalence of FGM among this age in Gambia at 56 per cent, Mauritania 54 per cent and Indonesia where around half of girls aged 11 and younger have undergone the practice.
- Countries with the highest prevalence among girls and women aged 15 to 49 are Somalia 98 per cent, Guinea 97 per cent and Djibouti 93 per cent.
- FGM is mostly carried out on young girls sometime between infancy and age 15.
- FGM cause severe bleeding and health issues including cysts, infections, infertility as well as complications in childbirth increased risk of newborn deaths.
- The Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 calls for an end to FGM by 2030 under Goal 5 on Gender Equality, Target 5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.
- The elimination of FGM has been called for by numerous inter-governmental organizations, including the African Union, the European Union and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, as well as in three resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly.

Nurses and midwives have a key role to play in educating individuals, families and communities to prevent FGM; supporting women and girls who have been a victim of FGM; and responding to the sexual and reproductive health needs of women and girls who suffer from its consequences.

Go to:

<http://www.un.org/en/events/femalegenitalmutilationday/>

## ARC YEAR 4 SUMMATIVE

The African Regulatory Collaborative (ARC) held its Year 4 Summative Congress in Windhoek, Namibia 24-26 February 2015. Nursing and midwifery leaders from seventeen countries from east, central and southern Africa attended the Congress: Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Seychelles, South Africa, South Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The ARC initiative is a four-year partnership between the USA Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta; the Lillian Carter Center for Global Health and Social Responsibility at Emory University also in Atlanta; the East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community; and the Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation. Each year of the initiative, a number of countries in the east, central and southern Africa region are awarded small grants to work on projects to strengthen nursing and midwifery.



The main objectives of the Summative Congress were to:

- To celebrate and share the achievements of the ARC Year 3 grant recipients.
- To provide assistance and technical support to countries to develop their regulatory improvement projects to facilitate the expansion of HIV services, particularly paediatric HIV services.
- To share the latest thinking in relation to viral load testing and the impact on HIV care and treatment.
- To foster collaboration and promote networking between nursing and midwifery stakeholders in each country and within the region and advance their collaborative leadership skills.

In ARC Year 4, the successful countries to receive grants are: Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Mozambique, Rwanda, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

## MENTAL HEALTH LEGISLATION REFORM PROJECT

The CNMF is undertaking a project funded by the Commonwealth Foundation to reform the mental health legislation in two Commonwealth countries. The project is a follow on from research conducted in 2013 by the Indian Centre for Mental Health Law and Policy for the Commonwealth Health Professions Alliance which assessed mental health legislation in 45 Commonwealth countries against the United National Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability. The research found that:

- Mental health legislation in many Commonwealth member states is outdated, does not fulfil member states' international human rights obligations toward persons with mental disorders, and is not compliant with the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- Many mental health laws reviewed treat persons with mental disorders as needing protection rather than as subjects with rights and as a result, mental health legislation, instead of protecting the rights of persons with mental disorders, is likely to lead to violation of their rights, particularly the rights of vulnerable groups with mental health problems such as minors, women, and minority groups.
- Mental health legislation in many countries is based on an out dated understanding of mental disorders; ignores advances in the care and treatment of mental disorders and denies the capacity of persons with mental disorders to manage their lives. The language of mental health laws in many instances, such as the use of terms such as: 'lunatic', 'insane', 'idiot', 'imbecile', and 'mentally defective', adds to negative perceptions and further stigmatises persons with mental disorders.

The report (available from <http://www.chpa.co>) recommended that Commonwealth member states should urgently undertake reform of their mental health legislation to ensure that the legislation meets their obligations under international human rights treaties, in particular the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The Governments of the Seychelles and Botswana are partnering with the CNMF and the Indian Centre for Mental Health Law and Policy to review their mental health and related legislation against the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability and consider recommendations for reform of their mental health legislation. The CNMF is very appreciative of the opportunity provided by the Commonwealth Foundation for funding for this important project which it is hoped will be a model for other Commonwealth countries.

## WHO PUBLIC CONSULTATION Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health

The WHO has announced a public consultation on the development of a Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health. In May 2014, the 67th World Health Assembly requested the WHO Director-General to develop and submit a new global strategy on human resources for health to be considered by the 69th World Health Assembly in May 2016.



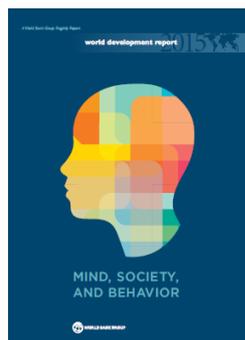
This global dialogue will inform a final version to be submitted to the WHO Executive Board in January 2016. It is imperative that nurses and midwives and their representative associations make submissions to this consultation.



The draft strategy is now open for public consultation until **31 August 2015**. It represents a critical component of the WHO strategic vision toward universal health coverage (UHC) in the framework of the post 2015 health development agenda. The draft will also be discussed at various global health events as well as a number of WHO regional technical consultations.

To access the online consultation, go to: [http://who.int/hrh/resources/online\\_consult-globstrat\\_hrh/en/](http://who.int/hrh/resources/online_consult-globstrat_hrh/en/)

## WORLD DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2015



The World Development Report 2015: *Mind Society and Behaviour*, was released late 2015. The report is published by The World Bank and is downloaded free from: <http://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/Publications/WDR/WDR%202015/WDR-2015-Full-Report.pdf>.

The main message of the report is that when it comes to understanding and changing human behaviour, we can do better. Recent research has advanced our understanding of the psychological, social and cultural influences on decision making and human behaviour and has demonstrated that they have a significant impact on development outcomes. Important chapters examine poverty, early childhood development, household finance, productivity, health and climate change.



Commonwealth Nurses  
and Midwives Federation



Conference  
**2016**  
LONDON UK

## CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

**3rd Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Conference**

**Toward 2020:  
Celebrating nursing and midwifery leadership**

12–13 March 2016 London UK

The bicentennial of the birth of Florence Nightingale.  
The WHO decade for a healthy world.

Celebrating the leadership of Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing, the first nursing theorist, a great nursing leader, and a role model for nurses everywhere.

### Abstract guidelines

The abstracts should demonstrate outstanding and innovative nursing and midwifery leadership to individuals, families and communities in the Commonwealth in any setting where nurses and midwives provide care in the following areas:

- clinical practice
- research and innovation
- education and training
- policy and projects
- management and administration
- legislation and regulation

### Abstract submission

Submit your abstracts (of no more than 300 words) to the Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation by 31 May 2015.

Email submission: [cnf@commonwealthnurses.org](mailto:cnf@commonwealthnurses.org)

Web submission: <http://www.commonwealthnurses.org/conference2016>

The CNMF is a federation of national nursing and midwifery associations in Commonwealth countries.

The CNMF was established in 1973 and is a Commonwealth accredited civil society organisation. The purpose of the CNMF is to contribute to the improved health of citizens of the Commonwealth by fostering access to nursing education, influencing health policy, developing nursing networks and strengthening nursing leadership through in-country education and training; capacity building with standards and regulation; a bi-annual journal; a monthly e-News; a biennial conference; and representing nurses and midwives in Commonwealth forums.



Commonwealth Nurses  
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