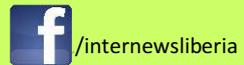


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Welcome to the Internews Newsletter for Media in Liberia. This newsletter is created with the intent to support the work of local media in reporting about Ebola and Ebola related issues in Liberia. Internews welcomes feedback, comments and suggestions from all media receiving this newsletter and invites all of them to forward, share and re-post this newsletter as widely as possible.



“POST-EBOLA SYNDROME”: Considering the disease’s long-term physical effects

According to the United Nations, there are now between 5,000 and 10,000 Ebola survivors throughout West Africa. These survivors often face stigma upon returning to their communities, lose income during their sickness, and suffer emotional grief over the loss of family and friends. Many or all of their belongings have been destroyed to prevent further spread of the disease.

Yet beyond these serious social, economic, and emotional impacts, some survivors are also complaining of physical side effects from the disease, months after they are released from treatment centers. It is a condition some doctors are calling “post-Ebola Syndrome” or PES. The most common of these lasting side effects include:

- Eye problems;
- body pain (in joints, muscles, and chest area);
- hair loss;
- memory loss; and/or
- anxiety attacks (feeling anxious).

To date, there are very few scientific studies focusing on the ongoing health of those who are cured of Ebola, and very little is known about long-term effects from the virus. This makes it extremely difficult for doctors to determine the actual causes for these side effects – whether they are a result of the disease itself, the type of care or treatment(s) the patients received during their illnesses, a reaction to the heavy disinfectants used in care centers, or maybe a combination of different things.

Therefore, calls for increased research into these side effects are growing. This type of research is important to help medical professionals determine the cause(s) of the effects, as well as develop effective treatments to minimize their impacts for both current and future survivors.

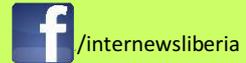
In Monrovia, a small team of health workers at the ELWA Hospital are now running a special ‘Ebola Survivors Clinic’. Started just last month, the clinic is held once a week and offered FREE OF CHARGE to Ebola survivors.

As the clinic’s supervisor, Dr John Fankhauser explains, “Once someone is cured from the virus, it’s very common for people to have long-term complications from Ebola. I want Ebola survivors to know that there is concern for them, and that the clinic here at ELWA hospital was established specifically with them in mind.”

According to Dr Fankhauser, ELWA organizers are currently working with other organizations to establish similar clinics throughout the country. But for now, survivors interested in attending an Ebola survivor’s clinic are invited to Monrovia’s ELWA Hospital – where **the Survivor’s Clinic runs from 9am to 2pm every Wednesday**. Although they do accept walk-ins, Dr Fankhauser says it’s preferable if patients call ahead to say they’re coming – at either 0770.485485 or 0880.485485.

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Local media is encouraged to share this information with their communities – and to invite survivors to attend the ELWA clinic should they wish to speak with a doctor about any long-term Ebola effects they may be experiencing.

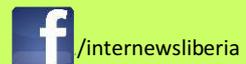
FOR MEDIA-SPECIFIC ENQUIRIES, you can also contact:
John Fankhauser, MD.
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Deputy Medical Director, ELWA Hospital.
fankmd@gmail.com OR 0770-26-26-26

SOURCES:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/02/05/post-ebola-syndrome_n_6619196.html
& <http://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2014/p1212-ebola-survivors.html>
& <http://www.who.int/features/2014/post-ebola-syndrome/en/>
& <http://abcnews.go.com/Health/post-ebola-syndrome-persists-virus-cured-doctor/story?id=26657931>

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FOLLOWING THE MONEY: Reporting on Ebola Spending

Last September, the U.S. government announced that it would contribute \$500million towards the Ebola relief effort in West Africa. Shortly before, the European Union also declared that €140million would be spent on areas including treatment centers and mobile laboratory services in the affected countries. Similarly, the World Bank approved a \$105million grant to help communities cope with economic hardship, the WHO launched a \$100million response plan, and the African Development Bank's pledged \$60million to be channeled through the WHO for disease surveillance, case management, logistical support and capacity development.

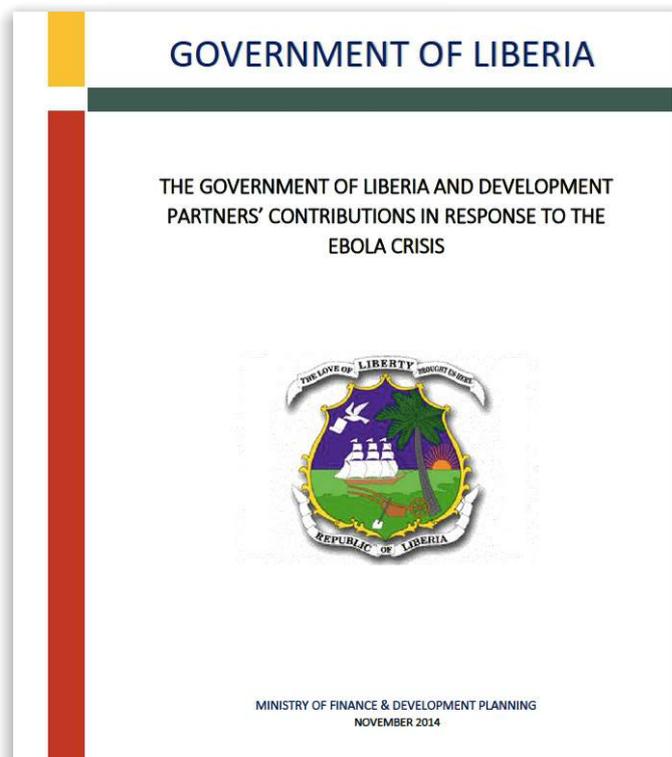
These organizations were not alone. Other (albeit smaller) donations also poured in from governments, organizations and individuals located around the world. All for the purpose of *stopping Ebola*.

For Liberia, the majority of these pledges came just around the time when the Liberian Government announced that its own initial \$5million contribution to contain the disease had already been spent. This was an announcement which was immediately met with a request from the Liberian Senate – for a full disclosure explaining exactly how this money had been used.

It was a request answered through the release of a special Ebola Financing Report by the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning. This report can be downloaded here:

Ebola Financing Report (November 2014) – from The Ministry of Finance & Development Planning:

<http://bit.ly/1zSpQJe>



Included in this document are the details for the 'Ebola Trust Fund' account at the Central Bank of Liberia (Account # 022530000215) – further details for which can also be requested for under the Liberian Freedom of Information (FOI) law. There are explanations as to which organizations and government branches the committed funds were spent through, and details for the various foreign commitments that have been made to help support the fight against Ebola – including the total amounts promised, and how much of that had been delivered by November.

Commenting on the overall situation, Blair Glencorse – founder and executive director of the Accountability Lab – co-wrote an article for the UK's *Guardian* newspaper. In it was this statement:

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“The people of Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone deserve to know the difference between who pledged to help them and who actually delivered. They deserve to know how much has been spent on expensive consultants or administrative overheads versus practical relief supplies. They deserve to know what amount, if any, has built sustainable national health infrastructure, compensated local medical personnel for their service, and contributed to scientific research to find a cure for Ebola.”

As the humanitarian response against the Ebola virus continues in Liberia, as well as in neighboring Sierra Leone and Guinea, these are just a few of the areas that local media can help in – to ensure the public receives “the information it deserves”. Therefore:

Local journalists are encouraged to follow up with authorities (government ministries, international aid organizations, UN agencies, etc) to help ensure the Liberian public has access to information regarding how the money donated for combatting Ebola in this country is being spent. Speculations do not help and it is important that media reporting on this issue base their reporting on facts. Important questions to ask include: How the donated money continues to be spent? Which organizations have kept their promises made to the people of Liberia? What will happen with donated items and supported infrastructure (ETU materials, ambulances, etc) once the emergency situation is over? And what will happen to any unused funds once Liberia has finally been declared Ebola-free? Under Liberia’s Freedom of Information law, the public has THE RIGHT to request this type of information.

SOURCES:

<http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/sep/26/liberian-senate-transparency-ebola-funds>

<http://www.liberianobserver.com/politics/senate-requests-expenditure-report-us5m-ebola-fund>

Ebola Financing Report (November 2014) – from The Ministry of Finance & Development Planning:

<http://www.mfdp.gov.lr/index.php/component/content/article/131-new-reports/145-ebola-financing-report-november-2014>

Quarterly Report of the Health Sector Pool Fund (July 1 – Sept 30, 2014) – from The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare:

http://www.mohsw.gov.lr/documents/HSPF_Q1_2014-15_revised%20final_lr.pdf

To view a copy of Liberia's Freedom of Information Act:

<http://www.liberianembassyus.org/uploads/documents/Liberia%20Freedom%20of%20Information%20Act%202010x.pdf>

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ROUTINE IMMUNIZATIONS (PIRI) vs. THE EBOLA VACCINE TRIAL (PREVAIL):

What is the difference?

In last week's newsletter, Internews carried two different articles – one introducing the ongoing Periodic Routine Immunization for children and pregnant women (also called PIRI), and the other article explaining the newly launched experimental Ebola vaccine study, called PREVAIL. **AGAIN, PLEASE**

NOTE: THESE TWO PROGRAMS ARE NOT THE SAME THING. AND IF YOU AGREE TO TAKE PART IN ONE OF THE PROGRAMS, IT DOES NOT MEAN YOU AGREE TO TAKE PART IN THE OTHER.

To help explain the difference between the two vaccination programs – one of which deals with testing vaccines that were made to help prevent Ebola (PREVAIL) and one of which has nothing to do with Ebola (PIRI) – we have developed this chart:

Recommendations for Journalists:

It is very important for local media outlets and journalists to help their communities understand the difference between these two vaccination and immunization programs. Because there have been a lot of rumors surrounding the PIRI immunization program, a lot of mothers have not brought their small children to receive their routine immunizations offered under the PIRI program.

	The Periodic Routine Immunization for children and pregnant women (PIRI)	The experimental Ebola vaccine trial (PREVAIL)
What is it?	The routine immunizations that are included in the PIRI program HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH EBOLA . These immunizations focus on preventing childhood diseases including Measles, Tuberculosis, Hepatitis B, Tetanus, Meningitis, Whooping Cough, Diphtheria, Pneumonia, Polio, and Yellow Fever.	This vaccine trial aims to study the effectiveness of two new experimental vaccines: each created in the hopes of preventing healthy people from getting Ebola.
How does it work?	These immunizations have all been approved and tested for safety, and are currently being used in other countries all over the world (including the US, Canada, Europe, etc). They have been used for decades, and have each been shown to be very effective. These immunizations prevent children from getting childhood diseases including measles, tuberculosis, etc.	These vaccines do not cure or treat Ebola . They were invented to train the body of healthy people to fight off the disease in future. To prevent people from getting sick later on. However, please note: It is unknown if the vaccines currently being tested in Liberia will in fact prevent Ebola. That is the purpose of this study - to help determine if they work.

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<p>Who is it for?</p>	<p>This program is for all children and pregnant women.</p> <p>As part of this program, children under one year of age will receive all routine EPI (Expanded Program on Immunization) vaccines. Children aged between 12-23 months will receive any remaining doses missed during the EVD outbreak.</p>	<p>This study is for healthy adults who do not have Ebola. NO CHILDREN will be asked to take part in this study. People can volunteer to join the study if they are 18 years or older, plan to be in Monrovia for at least a year, and have a normal temperature. People at high risk for Ebola – including health workers and ambulance workers – are especially being encouraged to join this study.</p>
<p>Who is organizing this?</p>	<p>This program was launched by The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MOHSW) in conjunction with the World Health Organization. UNICEF helped train the field monitoring team from the MOHSW and other partners to ensure effective monitoring of PIRI activities in all 15 counties.</p>	<p>This study is being supported and paid for by the Liberian Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MOHSW) and the US National Institutes of Health.</p>
<p>When does it happen?</p>	<p>The Periodic Intensification of Routine Immunization (PIRI) program began in Lofa County in December 2014, for children five and under. That was the first round.</p> <p>The second round happens in February, and the third round of these immunizations will be offered in March / April.</p> <p>These immunization programs happen every year in Liberia.</p>	<p>This study was also launched on 2 February, 2015, and the first trial vaccines were given at Redemption Hospital in New Kru Town. According to the PREVAIL organizers, it is hoped that approximately 27,000 healthy adult volunteers will participate in the vaccines trial in Liberia – which is expected to take place at 10 or more clinics in and around Monrovia.</p>
<p>Why take part?</p>	<p>The immunizations offered in the PIRI program prevent children from getting childhood diseases including measles, tuberculosis, etc. These diseases each have the potential to be extremely dangerous. By taking part in the Periodic Routine Immunization program, you can help save your child's life.</p>	<p>It is possible that there may not be any direct benefit from participation in the vaccine study. But by participating in this study, Liberians can take part in helping to find a vaccine which will prevent the virus from recurring in the future – both in West Africa and elsewhere.</p>

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Citizens' Feedback

Local population is afraid that the vaccine will bring Ebola back because their relatives are calling them from Monrovia and saying that the trial vaccine will insert a bit of Ebola in your body. (Kolubah AKoi)

Lofa

Comments have been recorded from people saying that they are not interested in the vaccine because they believe that Ebola is a man-made illness created for the purpose of making money

Cape Mount

Media report that people in Bomi do not have clear information on this trial vaccine and therefore they are suspicious about it.

Bomi

The local population is worried that if you take the Ebola vaccine you will be injected with the Ebola virus and that in the long run side effects will emerge, when the health organizations leading the trial will be already out of Liberia

Montserrado

People in Bopolu are saying that they believe that the trial vaccine does not really exist because no one came to Gbarpolu to provide it to people.

Gbarpolu

In Bong, some people are very optimistic about the vaccine trial while others are afraid because there is no guarantee for safety, as the side effects may be long term.

Bong

1. People out of Buchanan do not have any information about the Ebola trial vaccine.
2. People are confused as why before they have been told by the government that there is no vaccine for Ebola. People highlight also that they have been instructed before by social mobilization groups not to believe to anyone that told them that they had an Ebola vaccine. Now they are afraid to get that vaccine because they are not sure what to believe. (Timothy Mulbah)

Grand Bassa

People are waiting for the Vaccine Trial and ask when it will be rolled out to Grand Gedeh

Grand Gedeh

1. Local citizens in Kakata believe that the government and its health partners did not properly inform the local population and that the vaccine trial is using the local population as Guinea Pigs. Rumors are also being spread that it was a similar vaccination process in Guinea that brought Ebola to West Africa

2. Local citizens believe that Liberia is being used as a testing ground for the trial vaccine

Margibi

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RESOURCES:

Ebola Financing Report (November 2014) – from The Ministry of Finance & Development Planning:
<http://bit.ly/1zSpQJe>

Quarterly Report of the Health Sector Pool Fund (July 1 – Sept 30, 2014) – from The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare:

<http://bit.ly/1vrlp2H>

To view a copy of Liberia’s Freedom of Information Act:

<http://bit.ly/1DEIxm5>

Ministry of Health Website: <http://www.mohsw.gov.lr>

Ebola Updates from the Ministry of Health:
http://www.mohsw.gov.lr/content_display.php?sub=report2

Press Releases from the Ministry of Health:
http://www.mohsw.gov.lr/content_display.php?sub=press_release2

Ministry of Information Page:
<http://www.micatliberia.com/>

Ebola Updates from the Ministry of Information:
<http://www.micatliberia.com/index.php/ebola-update.html>

WHO Ebola Updates: <http://apps.who.int/ebola/>

WHO Situation Reports:
<http://apps.who.int/ebola/en/current-situation>

UNICEF Liberia: <http://www.unicef.org/liberia>

UNICEF Liberia Press Releases:
<http://www.unicef.org/liberia/media.html>

Ebola Response Contact List by Organization:
<http://bit.ly/1D4VEwT>

Ebola Communication Network:
<http://ebolacommunicationnetwork.org>

Message Guide for Ebola Communications:
<http://bit.ly/1yZXqZX>