



Report of the European Epidemic and Biological Co-Ordination Clinical Working Meeting

2 February 2016

Bichat Medical Faculty, 16 rue Henri Huchard, 75018 Paris, France

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The meeting brought together the clinicians from the French Infectious Diseases Society (FIDS/SPILF) Epidemic and Biological Risk Coordination (EBRC) group with representatives from seven neighbouring European nations and Norway to explore common areas of interest and opportunities for networking both within Europe and globally via the WHO-sponsored Emerging Disease Clinical Assessment and Response Network (EDCARN). The focus of discussion was on clinical preparation and safe management of patients with highly infectious diseases.

Discussions focused on the following topic areas:

- 1. Clinical Management & Care** – Senior clinicians exchanged recent experience of clinical management and preparedness for EBR patients, mainly with recent Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in West Africa, on a country-by-country basis. Shared themes and issues were established, including: state of preparedness, level of training, differing practices for lab diagnostics, how a country's geography and demography determine health system design, the interface between clinical services and public health as a critical factor for effective response, patient and sample transportation, communications and media, and the policy and political dimension for decision making and resource allocation.
- 2. The Role of Emergency Departments and the Approach to Patient Isolation Units** – These topics were considered in two workshops with a focus on identifying common concerns and approaches, exploring different country-based solutions, and opportunities for joint working. The importance of improving early detection of suspect patients was underlined. It was suggested that general principles to inform the design of isolation units be drawn up and discussed. Such general principles should be adaptable to different contexts.
- 3. Research Needs** – In two presentations, the challenges facing research on highly infectious diseases were explored. Further work is required in the domains of clinical

cohorts and trials, ethics, sustaining basic research between epidemics, and improving research on transmission, infection control and behavioural aspects.

4. Next Steps:

- a. The participants expressed strong support for a European-based clinical network, linking to national groups such as EBRC, and globally with EDCARN. The network should have a strong focus on clinical management, paralleling and interacting with other existing networks on, for example, laboratory diagnostics for a multidisciplinary approach;
- b. Informal links and information sharing, for example by conferences, teleconferencing on specific topics, and signposting to expertise are necessary to develop;
- c. A formal set of short, medium and long-term objectives has to be defined collectively, including gathering field expertise to influence EU policy makers, as needed, and identifying issues, solutions and who is working on what;
- d. Alongside this, the group needs a clear identity and effective communication.