

6 BEYOND OUR BORDERS

The 'Beyond our Borders' column focuses on selected and current international diseases that may affect South Africans travelling abroad. Numbers correspond to Figure 6 on page 9.

1. Ebola in the Democratic Republic of Congo

The WHO was notified of Ebola virus disease (EVD) outbreak in Likati Health Zone, Bas Uele Province in the north-east of the Democratic Republic of Congo on 11 May 2017 by the DRC Ministry of Health. Since then, the outbreak continues to evolve. On 20 May 2017, three suspected EVD cases and one death were reported from Muma and Ngay health areas in Likati Health Zone. As of 27 May 2017, 16 suspected EVD cases and four deaths have been reported, giving a case fatality rate (CFR) of 11%. Of the samples tested at the Institut National de Recherche Biomedicale (INRB) mobile lab, 33 have tested negative by PCR, while two of the five blood samples analysed at the Kinshasa national reference lab were confirmed as Zaire Ebola virus. Of the 419 listed contacts, 54 have completed the follow-up period while 365 continue to be monitored.

2. Meningococcal meningitis in Nigeria

As of 14 May 2017, a total of 13 943 cases of meningitis, including 1 112 deaths (CFR of 8.0%), has been reported from 222 LGAs across 23 states since mid-December 2016. The majority of the reported cases, 46.8%, were in the age group 5-14 years. However, the situation continues to improve since the week ending 14 May 2017, when a total of 523 meningitis cases, including 43 deaths (case fatality rate [CFR] of 8.2%) was reported, down from 2 500 cases recorded in the week ending 9 May 2017. *Neisseria meningitidis* serogroup C remains the predominant pathogen, accounting for 72.7% of the positive samples. A vaccination campaign is ongoing in the affected areas.

3. Meningococcal disease in Liberia

Neisseria meningitidis serotype C has been identified by the NICD, South Africa, as the cause of a cluster of 14 cases with eight deaths in Greenville city, Sinoe County. It was notified to WHO on 25 April 2017 by the Liberia Ministry of Health. As of 19 May 2017, a total of 31 cases, including 13 deaths, (CFR of 42%) has been reported. The last case was reported on 7 May 2017. Active case-finding is still being conducted in the affected counties to identify cases and contacts.

4. Zika virus disease in Brazil

The Zika emergency has been declared over by Brazil's Ministry of Health on 11 May 2017. This is due to the decrease in the number of Zika cases to

7 911 during January - 15 April 2017, compared to 170 535 cases for the same period in 2016, representing a reduction of over 95 percent.

5. Yellow fever outbreak in Brazil

According to Ministry of Health, at least 259 people have died from yellow fever in Brazil in 2017 and mostly in the southeast of the country. Presently there is increase in number of confirmed cases to 756, with Minas Gerais and Espirito Santo provinces reporting 448 and 234 confirmed cases, respectively. A mass vaccination campaign has taken place. In addition, environmental measures to eliminate breeding grounds of the vector *Aedes aegypti* have been conducted by both government and civil society.

6. Avian influenza in China

The number of human infections with avian influenza A (H7N9) in the 5th epidemic wave (i.e. onset since 1 Oct 2016) is greater than the numbers of human cases reported in earlier waves. The National Health and Family Planning Commission of China (NHFPC) continue to notify around 20 additional laboratory-confirmed cases of human H7N9 virus to the WHO almost every 10 days. To date, a total of 1 439 laboratory-confirmed human infections with avian influenza A(H7N9) virus has been reported through IHR notification since early 2013. Most cases are exposed to the virus through contact with infected poultry or contaminated environments, including live poultry markets. A diagnosis of infection with an avian influenza virus should be considered in individuals who develop severe acute respiratory symptoms while travelling in or soon after returning from an area where avian influenza is a concern. Travellers are advised to avoid poultry farms and contact with animals in live poultry markets and to practice strict hand hygiene when travelling to countries known to have outbreaks.

7. Zika virus disease in India

On 15 May 2017, three laboratory-confirmed Zika virus cases were detected during routine surveillance activities in Ahmedabad, Gujarat State, India. Case 1 was detected in a 64-year-old male with a 8-day history of acute febrile illness. Case 2 was detected in a post-partum female who developed a pyrexia post-delivery. Case 3 was detected in a 22-year-old pregnant woman at 37 weeks of gestation.



Source: Data are sourced from ProMED (www.promed.org) and the World Health Organization (www.who.int) by Division of Public Health Surveillance and Response, NICD-NHLS.

Figure 6. Current outbreaks that may have implications for travellers. Numbers correspond to text above. The red dot is the approximate location of the outbreak or event.