

1. The response to a viral hemorrhagic fever outbreak

MSF: Marco Visser

Marco Visser from MSF, gave a clear description of the main characteristics and activities taken during a viral hemorrhagic fever outbreak, by stressing the role of the community, volunteers, patients and governmental institutions.

The case study was a community in Africa, where the interaction with animals (mainly monkeys), the alimentary habits (Bush meat consumption) and the burial rituals, were the key elements related to the disease.

The elements mentioned were:

- Need of resource, mainly human resources, it is not easy to find people willing to cooperate.
 - Gap between theory and reality. Main factors:
 - o For this specific case the amount of water required for disinfection was high (600-700 litres per day per person). This resource is not always easily available; it makes it difficult to implement the actions.
 - o Need of training plus supervision.
 - o Communication: it is not always easy.
 - o Food provision.
 - o Difficulties of having the burial outside the treatment/isolation camp (specific situation for the case presented)
 - o Dilemma House care vs Centre care.
 - *Discussion*
 - o Importance of involvement of community leaders – in the case it was present, nonetheless it was difficult to persuade people of the need of isolation.
 - o The isolation camp should be transparent / visible: it means that the community should be able to know what is going on in the camp, it reduces resistance.
 - o Involvement of health organisation: there is a limited participation due to the capacity of those institutions.
 - o Considerations related to meat consumption: the main point is to teach people how to cook it and how to handle “ blood”, by doing that it is possible to avoid disease spread.
 - o Outbreak in monkey community, which actions are/were taken? Not clear answer, there are some NGOs working with monkeys. In some cases the Monkeys/Gorillas are killed.
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