African Doctor Treats Ebola With HIV Drug Epivir (Lamivudine)

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A doctor caring for Ebola patients in rural Liberia says he is successfully treating them with the HIV med Epivir (lamivudine). Gorbee Logan, the physician, told CNN he got the idea when he read that HIV and the Ebola virus replicate inside the human body in similar ways.

He first tried the drug acyclovir, but didn't have any luck. Logan then gave lamivudine to 15 patients, and all but two survived. That 15 percent mortality rate is a great improvement considering that Ebola is fatal nearly 70 percent of the time.

Anthony Fauci, MD, director of the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, acknowledged there could be merit to Logan's idea.

In related news, a man hospitalized in Dallas on Tuesday, September 31, is the first person in the United States diagnosed with Ebola, CNN reports. He had recently been in Liberia and but didn't show any symptoms until after arriving in Texas, according to the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Thomas Frieden, MD, who would not state whether the patient is a U.S. citizen or how he contracted the virus.

The incubation period of the often-deadly virus can last anywhere from two to 21 days; it is spread by direct contact with even microscopic amounts of bodily fluids of someone sick with the disease. Ebola causes flulike symptoms, hemorrhagic fever and bleeding.

Frieden said that everyone who came in contact with the patient has been isolated and the ambulance that transported him had been properly decontaminated. "I have no doubt," he said, "that we will control this case of Ebola so that it does not spread widely in this country."

According to the World Health Organization, since the Ebola outbreak in Africa earlier this year, about 3,000 people have died from the disease.

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