

Uganda confirms at least one case of Crimean-Congo fever

August 17 2013

An Ugandan farmer has been hospitalised with a confirmed case of Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever, and a further three people are suspected to have died from the same virus, the health ministry said Friday.

The virus, which causes severe bleeding and has a [fatality rate](#) as high as 40 percent, is usually spread by [tick bites](#), but can also be spread from person to person through close contact with blood or other secretions.

Tests carried out on the man hospitalised on August 10 in Agago district, around 100 kilometres (60 miles) from the border with South Sudan, "were positive for Crimean-Congo fever" (CCHF), junior health minister Elioda Tumwesigye told reporters.

"His illness started on August 8 with a high fever, general body weakness, muscle pains and bleeding," Tumwesigye said, adding that the farmer was being treated in isolation.

"We are also investigating three other deaths in the same area," she added.

The fever is endemic in Africa, the Balkans, the Middle East and Asia, according to the World Health Organisation.

Symptoms include a [high fever](#), rashes and swellings, while in its later stages the fever can cause heart or [liver failure](#), according to the WHO.

"This virus is transmitted to human beings through bites of infected ticks," Tumwesigye said. "The ticks pick up their infection from wild or [domestic animals](#) like sheep, cattle and goats among others."

It was initially feared to have been an outbreak of the far more deadly Ebola virus, which has surfaced several times in Uganda.

Last year Ebola killed at least 17 people in Uganda's western Kibale district, while the rare haemorrhagic disease killed 37 people in 2007, and at least 170 in the north of the country in 2000.

Ebola, which spreads through direct contact with the blood or other bodily fluids of infected persons, is fatal in about 50 to 90 percent of cases, with victims bleeding from body orifices before dying in the most severe instances.

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