

WHO medic with Ebola taken to Germany for treatment (Update)

August 27 2014

A World Health Organization doctor who has contracted Ebola arrived in a German hospital Wednesday, the first patient with the virus to be treated in the country, officials said.

The man—a Senegalese epidemiologist infected in Sierra Leone, according to the WHO—has requested that his name, age and health status not be made public, said his German doctors.

The patient arrived on a specially equipped aircraft in the northern city of Hamburg, and he was able to walk off the plane by himself, said Hamburg health department spokesman Rico Schmidt.

A convoy of police and fire brigade vehicles then accompanied his ambulance to the University Hospital Hamburg-Eppendorf, which specialises in treating highly contagious diseases.

Doctors there voiced optimism they could cure the man in their isolation ward with "supportive care" measures such as bringing down his fever, reducing pain and keeping his body well hydrated.

"We believe that the mortality rate of the Ebola disease can be significantly reduced with these simple measures," said the tropical diseases doctor treating him, Stefan Schmiedel.

He told a press conference that the patient's condition "raises the hope that he will benefit from the treatment".

Asked whether the Senegalese man would be given experimental drugs against Ebola, Schmiedel said "we don't want to speculate at this point about possible therapies".

The WHO had in July asked for another of its employees to be treated in the hospital, but the infected health worker died soon after.

The lethal tropical virus which emerged in west Africa early this year has since infected more than 2,600 people and killed 1,427.

Liberia has been worst hit with 624 registered deaths. Guinea, where the disease was first discovered, has reported 406 deaths, Sierra Leone 392 and Nigeria five, the WHO said on Friday.

The UN body said on Monday that more than 120 health workers across west Africa had died during the "unprecedented" outbreak, and more than 240 had been infected.

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Citation: WHO medic with Ebola taken to Germany for treatment (Update) (2014, August 27) retrieved 2 May 2024 from

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