

Test shows Spain nursing assistant clear of Ebola

October 19 2014, by Harold Heckle



Teresa Mesa, spokesperson of Ebola patient Teresa Romero, shows to the media a video of Romero's husband, who is in quarantine, in front of the Carlos III Hospital in Madrid, Spain, Sunday, Oct. 19, 2014. Spain says a test has shown a nursing assistant who became infected with Ebola is now clear of all traces of the virus. A blood test has revealed that Teresa Romero's immune system has eliminated the virus from her body, according to a statement released by Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy's office late Sunday. Romero, 44, had treated two patients who died of Ebola at Carlos III hospital. The first, Miguel Pajares, contracted the disease in Liberia and died on Aug. 12 despite having been treated with the experimental drug ZMapp. The second was Manuel Garcia Viejo who died, aged 69, on Sept. 25. (AP Photo/Gabriel Pecot)

A Spanish nursing assistant appears to have recovered from the Ebola virus, authorities said Sunday, nearly two weeks after she became the first person infected outside West Africa in the current outbreak.

An initial test shows that Teresa Romero, 44, is now clear of all traces of the virus, the government said in a statement. She has been receiving treatment in quarantine at a Madrid [hospital](#) since then.

Romero had treated two Spanish missionaries who were brought back to Madrid for treatment at Carlos III hospital after contracting Ebola in West Africa. The missionaries, Miguel Pajares and Manuel Garcia Viejo, later died.

A second test in the coming hours is needed to absolutely confirm Romero's recovery, said Manuel Cuenca, microbiology director at Madrid's Carlos III hospital.

"I am very happy today, because we can now say that Teresa has vanquished the disease," said Romero's husband, Javier Limon, in a video recorded sitting on his hospital bed. He was put into quarantine after his wife became sick.

Health authorities euthanized the couple's pet dog named Excalibur on Oct. 8 instead of placing it in quarantine, creating outrage among animal rights activists. The next day, thousands of people gathered in more than 20 cities throughout Spain to show their solidarity with Romero and to protest against how Madrid authorities dealt with the dog.

A second nurse who had also treated Garcia Viejo was released from hospital on Oct. 11 after twice testing negative for Ebola.

Maria Teresa Mesa, a family friend who has acted as Romero's spokeswoman, told journalists outside the hospital that she had spoken with her Sunday.



Teresa Mesa, left, spokesperson of Ebola patient Teresa Romero speaks to the media in front of the Carlos III Hospital in Madrid, Spain, Sunday, Oct. 19, 2014. Spain says a test has shown a nursing assistant who became infected with Ebola is now clear of all traces of the virus. A blood test has revealed that Teresa Romero's immune system has eliminated the virus from her body, according to a statement released by Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy's office late Sunday. Romero, 44, had treated two patients who died of Ebola at Carlos III hospital. The first, Miguel Pajares, contracted the disease in Liberia and died on Aug. 12 despite having been treated with the experimental drug ZMapp. The second was Manuel Garcia Viejo who died, aged 69, on Sept. 25. (AP Photo/Gabriel Pecot)

"She's doing spectacularly well," she said. Mesa said Romero had also

told her that at one point she felt she could have succumbed to Ebola.

Earlier on Sunday, a crowd of several hundred people had gathered in Madrid to protest against Health Minister Ana Mato and to call for her resignation.

Among those who have been monitored at the Carlos III—apart from Romero's husband—there have been five doctors, five nurses, three hairdressers who attended her at a beauty salon, a paramedic and a health center cleaner. None have shown signs of having been infected.

Spain, meanwhile, has agreed to allow the U.S. to use two military bases in the southwest of the country to support its efforts to combat the Ebola outbreak in West Africa.

A Defense Ministry statement said the deal permits U.S. armed forces to use the air base at Moron de la Frontera near Seville and the naval station at Rota on Spain's Atlantic coast to transport personnel and materials to and from Africa. Defense Minister Pedro Morenes sealed the deal with U.S. counterpart Chuck Hagel in Washington.

The ministry statement, released late Saturday, said the agreement will be reviewed and updated on a case-by-case basis.

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