

Spain quarantines 3 more after nurse gets Ebola

October 7 2014, by Ciaran Giles



Hospital staff walk out past police guarding the entrance to protest outside the Carlos III hospital in Madrid, Spain, Tuesday, Oct. 7, 2014 where a Spanish nurse who is believed to have contracted the ebola virus from a 69-year-old Spanish priest is being treated after testing positive for the virus. The staff demanded the resignation of Health Minister Ana Mato for the handling of the case. Raising fresh concern around the world, the nurse in Spain became the first person known to catch Ebola outside the outbreak zone in West Africa. In Spain, the stricken nurse had been part of a team that treated two missionaries flown home to Spain after becoming infected with Ebola in West Africa. The nurse's only symptom was a fever, but the infection was confirmed by two tests, Spanish health officials said. She was being treated in isolation, while authorities drew up

a list of people she had had contact with. (AP Photo/Paul White)

Three more people were placed under quarantine for Ebola at a Madrid hospital where a Spanish nurse became infected, authorities said Tuesday. More than 50 other possible contacts were being monitored.

The [nurse](#), who had cared for a Spanish priest who died of Ebola, was the first case of Ebola being transmitted outside of West Africa, where a months-long outbreak has killed at least 3,500 people and infected at least twice as many.

Her case highlighted the dangers that health care workers face caring for Ebola patients—officials said she had changed a diaper for the priest and collected material from his room after he died. Dead Ebola victims are highly infectious and in West Africa their bodies are collected by workers in hazmat outfits.

News of the quarantines hit Spain's stock market Tuesday. Spain is one of Europe's biggest tourist destinations and stocks in tourism-related companies such as airlines and hotel chains fell on the Madrid stock exchange as investors feared the consequences of the Ebola case.

Shares in International Airlines Group, formed in early 2011 by the merger of British Airways and Iberia, dropped more than 6 percent, while those of NH Hotel Group and Melia Hotels were down 4 percent. The Ibex 35 stock market index was 1.7 percent lower.

The nurse's husband has shown no signs of having the disease but was hospitalized as a precaution, said Dr. Francisco Arnalich, head of internal medicine at the Carlos III hospital where all were under quarantine.

In addition, a second nurse who also treated the priest who died Sept. 25 was put into quarantine after experiencing diarrhea but she did not have a fever, the most common initial symptom for Ebola. And a Nigerian man who recently arrived in Spain was also under quarantine but tested negative for Ebola in his first test.

Public Health Director Mercedes Vinuesa told Parliament that authorities were drawing up a list of other people who may have had contact with the nurse. She has not been publicly identified but has no children.

By Tuesday, authorities had gotten in touch with 22 people—including relatives and personnel at the hospital in the Madrid suburb of Alcorcon where she went early Monday with a fever. They were also monitoring about 30 other members of the health care team that treated Manuel Garcia Viejo, the priest who returned from Sierra Leone and died of the disease.

The Health Ministry's chief coordinator for health emergencies, Fernando Simon, told Cadena SER radio the nurse was in stable condition and her life not in immediate danger. Health officials said she had no symptoms besides fever. Simon said the nurse's husband was "OK and relatively calm."



An ambulance transporting a Spanish nurse who believed to have contracted the ebola virus from a 69-year-old Spanish priest leaves Alcorcon Hospital in Madrid, Spain, Tuesday, Oct. 7, 2014. The nurse who treated a missionary for the disease at a Madrid hospital tested positive for the virus, Spain's health minister said Monday. The female nurse was part of the medical team that treated a 69-year-old Spanish priest who died in a hospital last month after being flown back from Sierra Leone, where he was posted. (AP Photo/Andres Kudacki)

He also rejected criticism that Spain authorities were slow to react to the case.

About 20 health care workers at the hospital protested Tuesday amid claims by nursing union officials that Spain was not giving them enough training and the most modern Ebola protection equipment.

The nurse with Ebola also assisted treating 75-year-old Spanish priest

Miguel Pajares, who got Ebola in Liberia, flew back to Spain, was treated with the experimental Ebola medicine ZMapp but still died. The other patient, Garcia Viejo, who was in charge of the San Juan del Dios hospital in Lunsar, Sierra Leone, was not given ZMapp because worldwide supplies ran out.

The virus that causes Ebola spreads through direct contact with the bodily fluids of an infected person.

The nurse's illness illustrates that health care workers are at risk even in more sophisticated medical centers of Europe and the United States, said Dr. William Schaffner, an infectious disease expert at Vanderbilt University.

"At greatest risk in all Ebola outbreaks are [health care](#) workers," he said.

More than 370 [health care workers](#) in the hardest-hit countries of Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone have died.

In the U.S., video journalist Ashoka Mukpo, who became infected while working in Liberia, arrived at the Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha. It's not clear how he was infected his father, Dr. Mitchell Levy said, adding that on Monday, his symptoms of fever and nausea still appeared mild.



Medical personnel carry a Spanish nurse who believed to have contracted the ebola virus from a 69-year-old Spanish priest into the ambulance before they leave Alcorcon Hospital in Madrid, Spain, Tuesday, Oct. 7, 2014. The nurse who treated a missionary for the disease at a Madrid hospital tested positive for the virus, Spain's health minister said Monday. The female nurse was part of the medical team that treated a 69-year-old Spanish priest who died in a hospital last month after being flown back from Sierra Leone, where he was posted. (AP Photo/Andres Kudacki)

Mukpo is the fifth American sick with Ebola brought back from West Africa for medical care. The others were aid workers—three have recovered and one remains hospitalized.

There are no approved drugs for Ebola, so doctors have tried experimental treatments in some cases.

A critically ill Liberian man hospitalized in Dallas is getting an

experimental treatment, Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital said. Thomas Eric Duncan is the first person to be diagnosed with Ebola in the U.S.; he was admitted to the hospital Sept. 28.

The hospital said Duncan was receiving an experimental medication called brincidofovir, which was developed to treat other types of viruses. Laboratory tests suggested it may also work against Ebola.

Texas Gov. Rick Perry urged the U.S. government to begin screening air passengers arriving from Ebola-affected nations, including taking their temperatures.

But Federal health officials say a travel ban could make the desperate situation worse in those countries. White House spokesman Josh Earnest said it was not currently under consideration.

President Barack Obama said the U.S. will be "working on protocols to do additional passenger screening both at the source and here in the United States." He did not outline any details.

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