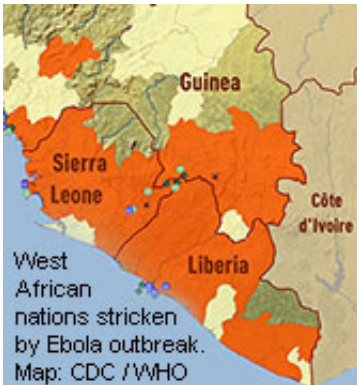


Ebola survivors face critical problems

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Programs have been set up to help provide support and new possessions.

(HealthDay)—Many Ebola survivors in West Africa face major challenges and need support to help them cope, two new studies report.

There are now thousands of Ebola [survivors](#), according to the new research. These survivors have to deal with stigma, income loss, long-term concerns about their mental and physical health, as well as grief and survivor guilt over the loss of family and friends, researchers explained.

Many or all of their possessions were destroyed to prevent transmission of the deadly disease.

One of the studies looked at Ebola survivors in Sierra Leone. The study found that they received inadequate counseling, material support and help reintegrating into their communities.

However, a group including the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Sierra Leone government, and non-government organizations and donor agencies was created to assess and meet the needs of Ebola survivors there. That support includes a "survivor packet" that provides cash, bedding, clothing and other items essential for day-to-day living.

Counselors accompany survivors when they return to their home villages in order to help them reintegrate.

The second study looked at Ebola survivors in the Firestone District in Liberia, where Firestone Liberia Inc. provides health care to 80,000 people.

The company created an Ebola survivor reintegration team that meets with survivors' neighbors and community leaders to emphasize that survivors no longer have Ebola.

Each survivor receives a "solidarity kit" that includes a new mattress, bedding, towels, insecticide-treated mosquito net, soaps and toiletries, a large bag of rice, three gallons of cooking oil, clothing, cash and toys for children.

Doctors visit survivors at home every week for three months, both to assess their health and to provide social and mental support.

The studies appeared in the Dec. 12 issue of *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, published by the CDC.

Ebola survivors are believed to have some immunity to the disease, and many have volunteered to provide care for other Ebola patients, according to information from the CDC.

"Nothing says more about the resilience of the human spirit than Ebola survivors who become role models for their communities," CDC Director Dr. Tom Frieden said in an agency news release.

"They show others that Ebola can be defeated and provide care, support, and inspiration for others stricken by this terrible disease," he added.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more about [Ebola](#).

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