

كلية طب وايل كورنيل في قطر Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar

Member of Qatar Foundation

Press Release

WCMC-Q expert allays fears about Ebola

Doha – January 20, 2015: The facts about the Ebola virus were outlined in the latest edition of Weill Cornell Medical College's (WCMC-Q) Ask the Expert series.

The interactive public talks are part of the College's Sahtak Awalan – Your Health First campaign and aim to help the public understand health matters and encourage them to make positive changes to their lives.

The Ebola virus has been causing headlines around the world with the media discussing the possibility of a pandemic. But Dr. Ravinder Mamtani, Associate Dean for Global and Public Health at WCMC-Q, said the general public had nothing to fear from the virus, unless they were travelling to one of the affected regions of West Africa.

Ebola was first discovered in 1976 when there were two outbreaks – one in Sudan and the second in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Since then the disease has made sporadic returns but the one that emerged in March of 2014 has been the deadliest, killing more than 7,000 people, mostly in West Africa.

Dr. Mamtani said: "It is true that the Ebola virus is highly infectious but it is not transmitted by casual contact. Also, Ebola cannot be transmitted through air like influenza, you have to physically come into contact with the bodily fluids of someone who is exhibiting symptoms which means it is unlikely to spread among populations distant from affected areas."

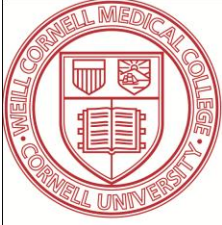
It is thought that fruit bats act as a reservoir for the disease, and they pass the virus onto other wildlife. Researchers believe that the virus is introduced into the human population through close contact with the blood and other bodily fluids of infected animals such as fruit bats, monkeys, chimpanzees and gorillas.

Currently there is no cure or vaccination against the disease, but Dr. Mamtani said that research is ongoing and there are two possible candidates for a vaccine. The most important issue now, though, is one of disease control; efficiently isolating patients and then correctly disposing of bedding and clothes once the patient has recovered.

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According to the World Health Organization, good outbreak control measures include “applying a package of interventions, namely case management, surveillance, contact tracing, a good laboratory service, safe burials and social mobilization”. Educating public about risk factors of the disease and appropriate preventive measures that individuals can take to reduce virus transmission is vital.

U.S Center for Disease Control (CDC) Advice for US Travelers to Countries where there is Ebola Outbreak.

If you travel to an area where there is an Ebola outbreak or are in direct contact with someone who has Ebola, CDC offers safety advice, including:

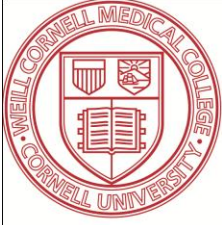
- Wash your hands and avoid contact with body fluids of an infected person.
- Don't handle items that may have come in contact with an infected person's body fluids. These can include clothes, bedding or medical equipment.
- Don't touch the body of someone who has died from Ebola.
- If you are in a country with an Ebola outbreak, avoid contact with animals such as bats or monkeys or with raw or undercooked meat. Don't eat wild animals hunted for food, also known as bush meat.

Source: The above information was downloaded verbatim from the American Public Health Association website, <http://www.getreadyforflu.org/EbolaFacts.htm> on January 10, 2015

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About Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar

Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar is a partnership between Cornell University and Qatar Foundation. It offers pre-medical and medical courses leading to the Cornell University M.D. degree with teaching by Cornell and Weill Cornell faculty and by physicians at Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) and Aspetar Orthopedic and Sports Medicine Hospital who hold Weill Cornell appointments. Through its biomedical research program, WCMC-Q is building a sustainable research community in Qatar while advancing basic science and clinical research. Through its medical college, WCMC-Q seeks to provide the finest education possible for medical students, to improve health care both now and for future generations, and to provide high quality health care to the Qatari population.

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