

## Liberia: Ebola treatment centre sets a new pace

October 2014

**At the Island Clinic in Monrovia, Liberia the discharge of a patient who has recovered from Ebola virus disease inspires joy among all the health workers at the facility. Every life saved is another boost to morale.**



WHO/C. Black

“As we see fewer people dying, the health workers are becoming more confident about their work,” says Dr Atai Omoruto, a Ugandan doctor deployed to Liberia by WHO and is serving as officer in charge at the clinic. “Understandably, at the beginning the health workers were anxious, but with more people surviving they feel empowered and motivated to continue. They are also getting more comfortable working with protective equipment”.

Dr Omoruto is part of a WHO-deployed team of Ugandan doctors and health workers. The group has vast experience in managing Ebola outbreaks, having faced many cases of this disease since 2000. The Ugandans work alongside nearly 600 Liberian colleagues treating patients and helping to maintain the strict infection control measures that are necessary at the centre.

“As we see fewer people dying, the health workers are becoming more confident about their work.”

**Dr Atai Omoruto, Ugandan doctor and officer in charge at the Island Clinic**

### Addressing risks for health workers

Health workers caring for people with Ebola virus disease are at high risk of becoming ill and dying from the disease. Since the beginning of the outbreak in Liberia, nearly 200 health workers across the country have been infected, and more than half of them have died from the disease.

Continuous training and monitoring of infection control is crucial in protecting more health workers from being infected.

Jackie Sudue, a Liberian nurse, became infected with Ebola virus early in September while handling the corpse of an individual who was believed incorrectly not to have died of Ebola. After spending two weeks in a treatment centre she recovered and tested negative for Ebola virus on 24 September.

"I will start working tomorrow at the Island Clinic," Ms Sudue says. "I wish I could work on psychosocial support, but working on a ward would be fine too. Being an Ebola survivor helps me to better understand patients."

### Discharges increasing

After being refurbished by the Liberian Ministry of Health and Social Welfare with support from WHO and other partners, the Island Clinic opened its doors as an Ebola treatment centre on 21 September. The centre filled to capacity within 24 hours.

"The first days were very intense. Many people were coming in and we did not know if they had Ebola virus disease or not. Others were already in a late stage of infection and were dying upon arrival," Dr Omoruto says. On average 15-20 patients are currently being admitted to the clinic every day.



WHO/C. Black

The Island Clinic was originally intended to have 120 beds but sometimes stretches its capacity to care for up to 210 patients.

Now as laboratory testing is starting to keep pace with admissions and potential discharges, more people are able to leave the clinic. On 26 September, 26 people were discharged, leaving some 160 patients inside the clinic. Early in October, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will begin operating a laboratory inside the clinic, which is expected to accelerate clinical decision-making.

For one patient, Mr Nyenati Kaffia, leaving was bittersweet. "I lost my son but my daughter recovered; we are going home now."

[Read more about the first days after the Island Clinic opened](#)

[Read more about the work done to transform the Island Clinic into a purpose-built Ebola treatment centre](#)

[Read more about the Ugandan medical team that is now working in the Island Clinic](#)



## Related links on Ebola virus disease

[Ebola virus disease - website](#)

[Fact sheet](#)

[Liberia country information](#)

## Publications on Ebola virus disease

[Ebola response roadmap](#)

August 2014

[Infection prevention and control guidance for care of patients with Filovirus haemorrhagic fever](#)

August 2014

[All publications](#)