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Panic as second victim dies of Crimean fever

KAKUMIRO. Tension has gripped Kakumiro District after a second person died of a disease with symptoms similar to those of the Congo-Crimean Haemorrhagic Fever (CCHF) which was recently declared in the area.

Some of the symptoms are similar to those of Ebola and one can easily be mistaken for the other.

The deceased, only identified as Nixon, a resident of Kitutuma village in Bujaja, Mpasana Sub-county died at the weekend at Nkooko Health Centre III where he had been admitted four days before.

According to a family member, Mr James Byaruhanga, the victim excreted blood from the nose, mouth and other body openings and had high fever, which are symptomatic of Congo-Crimea Haemorrhagic Fever.

He was buried with help from health workers under the Safe Burial Team which was recently appointed by the district and Uganda Virus Research Institute (UVRI).

“The man died showing all signs of the Congo fever. We were stopped from attending the burial function be-

cause of fear of contracting the disease,” Mr Byaruhanga said.

“After burying the deceased, the health workers told us he had died of suspected Congo-Crimean Haemorrhagic Fever and also gave us leaflets containing messages on how we can prevent the spread of the disease,” he added.

The district health officer, Mr Robert Senteza, confirmed the death and said blood samples of the deceased had been sent to Uganda Virus Re-

search Institute for further investigation.

“The person died with all the signs of the Congo fever but we are yet to confirm it. Our team of experts is already on the ground to ascertain the situation,” Mr Senteza said.

He said the district had appointed committees to handle disease surveillance and safe burial for victims. On May 27, State Minister for Health, Dr Sarah Opendi, refuted claims of Ebola outbreak in Kakumiro following the

death of a 35-year-old man in Nkooko Sub-county. It was later established the victim died of the Congo-Crimean Haemorrhagic Fever.

He victim succumbed to the disease at Mubende Hospital upon referral from Kakumiro Health Centre IV in critical condition.

Appeal

Mr Senteza said the district health team monitoring the outbreak had already placed 36 people under 21 days of surveillance after it was found that they had come into direct contact with the deceased. Some of the quarantined people include the family members of the deceased.

The Kakumiro District chairman, Mr Joseph Sentayi, said they were trying everything possible to contain the outbreak but added it not out of control. “We urge people to take the precautionary measures in order to minimise the spread of the disease,” Mr Sentayi appealed.

See related editorial on Page 14

ABOUT THE DISEASE

The Congo Crimean Haemorrhagic Fever is a viral zoonosis (animal-to-human) infection and is caused by a tick-borne virus.

Hosts. The hosts of the CCHF virus are mostly wild and domestic animals including cattle, sheep and goats. These animals become infected after being bitten by infected ticks and the virus

remains in their bloodstream for about two weeks, allowing the tick-animal-tick cycle to continue. **Symptoms.** These include sudden onset of high-grade fever, muscle aches, neck pains, neck stiffness, backache, headache, sore eyes, vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal pain, and sometimes bleeding from body openings.