



6 March 2015 - The [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) is ready to [launch Ebola vaccination trials](#) in Guinea tomorrow, which if found effective, could be the "game-changer to finally end the epidemic and an insurance policy for any future ones". According to the [latest update](#), Ebola has affected nearly 24,000 people, mostly in West Africa. About 40 per cent of the patients didn't survive the virus.

Based on promising data from initial clinical trials in late 2014, WHO announced it will launch a [Phase III Vaccination Trial](#) in Guinea on 7 March to test VSV-EBOV vaccine for efficacy and effectiveness to prevent Ebola. The first vaccination trials will take place in areas of Basse Guinée, the region that currently has the highest number of cases in the country.

"The [Ebola epidemic](#) shows signs of receding but we cannot let down our guard until we reach [zero cases](#)

," said Assistant Director-General Marie-Paule Kieny, who leads the Ebola Research and Development effort at WHO.

Liberia reported no new confirmed cases this week for the first time since the week of 26 May 2014, but the weekly number of confirmed cases has increased in both Sierra Leone and Guinea. In its latest update on Ebola, the World Health Organisation reported 132 new confirmed cases in West Africa in the week to 1 March, an increase of 33 per cent in comparison to the previous week.

Protection and Prevention

Explaining the trial strategy, WHO stated it will use "ring vaccination", based on the approach used to eradicate smallpox in the 1970s. This involves the identification of a newly diagnosed Ebola case – the so-called 'index case' – and the tracing of all his/her contacts. The contacts are vaccinated if they give their consent.

"The objectives of the trial are two-fold: to assess if the vaccine protects the contacts who were vaccinated and if vaccinating the contacts will create a buffer – or ring – of protected individuals – around the index case to prevent further spread of the infection", WHO added.

In addition, vaccination will also be proposed to frontline workers in the area where the trial will take place.

"If a vaccine is found effective, it will be the [first preventive tool against Ebola](#) in history", concluded WHO Director-General Dr. Margaret Chan.

Related Stories

[Helen Clark on Ebola: "Address drives of fragility which produced the crisis"](#)

[New Ebola Cases Reaching Record Low](#)

[Ebola kicked out from Kailahun, Sierra Leone](#)

Or check out the [UNRIC Library Backgrounder on Ebola](#) !