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P27 Transport factor in the spread of Ebola and the building of disaster risk management capacity in West Africa

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Background

Transportation has been seen as a vital ingredient to developmental process and facilitation of economic growth across the globe be it developed or developing world. The benefits of transportation to the socio-economic development of the world including health cannot be ignored. Transport and health are also been discovered to be interrelated in many areas. Furthermore, it is also observed that modern [mode of transportation](https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/earth-and-planetary-sciences/mode-of-transportation) has allowed and played a significant role in the movement of more people and products to travel around the world at a faster pace while they also open the ways to the interregional and international movement, spread and diffusion of infectious diseases, transfer of [health personnel](https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/paramedical-personnel) and equipment, provides access and enhanced patronage and utilization of health facilities across the globe. This includes the spread of [Ebola virus](https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/agricultural-and-biological-sciences/ebolavirus) disease (Ebola or EVD) that started in Guinea, [West Africa](https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/earth-and-planetary-sciences/western-africa) in March 2014. However, so many people contacted it in Guinea, [West Africa](https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/earth-and-planetary-sciences/western-africa) and died. As of mid –August, the virus had spread to neighboring [Sierra Leone](https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/sierra-leone), [Liberia](https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/liberia) and even distant country like Nigeria. As of October 2014, the spread has even gone beyond West Africa to [United States of America](https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/earth-and-planetary-sciences/united-states-of-america) (USA), Spain, France in Europe to mention a few, with WHO declaring that that infected persons could rise to 20,000 and said that it has used USD 489 million (NZD625 Million) to contain Ebola within six to nine months. Despite this enormous spending by the WHO and the governments of the affected countries, the continuous rapid spread of this virus is of great concern to every peace loving person across the globe and it is seriously spreading in border areas of the countries. The interest for this study is also based on the belief and observation that Ebola is spreading through different ways and means especially in developing countries where population is densely populated, high level of travel characteristics and porous borders among the neighboring nations. It is against this background that this study will examine the place of transportation in the spread of Ebola and the building of disaster risk management in West Africa states.

Methods

A preliminary study was conducted by the researcher (s) to find out what are the factors responsible for the fast spread of the disease in West Africa. At the initial stage literatures were reviewed to identify the factors that may likely be responsible for the wide spread of this disease and the factors as ranked by the respondents were analysed.

Results

It was observed that transportation play a significant role in the spread of the disease as a result of movement of people from one geographical location to another through the various means of transportation. For instance, Ebola came to Nigeria through an infected Liberian that travelled to Nigeria by air who became sick and refused to open up about his health status and he infested the staff of the hospital where he was admitted lending to the spread of the disease in Nigeria.

Conclusions

This paper presented key knowledge factors that were responsible for the wide spread of Ebola in West Africa but the impact of transport cannot be ignored as it ranked very high.