

# EDITORIAL

## The Ebola Epidemic and Translational Public Health

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Several weeks ago while preparing material for the next regular issue of *Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness*, I requested Dr. Skip Burkle to prepare a commentary from the global public health perspective on the current West African Ebola epidemic. As usual, Dr. Burkle provided a superb article that accompanies this editorial.<sup>1</sup> Discussions of this among colleagues resulted in an outpouring of support and multiple offers to provide commentaries on different aspects of the Ebola virus and the West African epidemic. The volume of material available and promised led to the decision to electronically publish in a timely manner an open-ended special issue on Ebola that would mainly be a compilation of commentaries presented in roughly chronological order.

Drs. Skip Burkle and Charles Beadling agreed to serve as Co-Editors of this work, which from the beginning was designed to be a conduit for operational and policy level information intended to help improve both health outcomes and critical decision making. The stated goal was to provide factual, useful information without political bias and not subject to exaggeration, useless hype, or alarm. The publications would be available to all practitioners, other health workers, and policy level decision makers attempting to deliver clinical care, provide needed support services to the population, and control and contain the viral spread and would help to determine the best policies moving forward. This tragedy is like no other crisis our world has ever witnessed. Because of this, much will change in the way we look at global health security for decades to come. It is crucial that this unpredictable journey to obtaining some semblance of health security be documented for scientists and historians alike.

As an academic journal, *Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness* has a responsibility to ensure accountability and transparency of all of its published

material as well as to provide information that is evidence based, wherever and whenever possible, and has been subject to peer review. These are the journal standards and every effort will be taken to apply them as we attempt to publish a live issue on an event that is currently evolving.

This approach fulfills two long-standing goals of the journal. The first is to provide a scientifically based journal in real time that can enhance response, inform sound policy, and adapt to changes over the course of an evolving event. The second goal is to help to develop a translational framework for public health by providing a platform for improving population health outcomes through the amelioration of health determinants in the broadest sense. By necessity, this framework requires the support of and input from the many disciplines that need to be integrated to enhance all phases of the disaster cycle, e.g., prevention and mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery and rehabilitation. Only through such an integrated multidisciplinary approach can we hope to translate disaster research and evidence-based knowledge into effective policy and approach global health security for all.

For an excellent discussion of this concept, see Ogilvie et al.<sup>2</sup>

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### REFERENCES

1. Burkle FM Jr. Operationalizing public health skills to resource poor settings: is this the Achilles heel in the Ebola epidemic campaign. *Disaster Med Public Health Prep.* 2014; doi: 10.1017/dmp.2014.95
2. Ogilvie D, Craig P, Griffin S, Macintyre S, Wareham NJ. A translational framework for public health research. *BMC Public Health.* 2009; 9:116.