



Operating procedures for ambulance services for patients with highly contagious diseases

Institutional Setting:

- Public health authority Düsseldorf
- Responsibility: Infectious diseases control, outbreak management, hospital hygiene, organization of the medical emergency services
- Framework: public health authority is part of the local administration
- there are two superior levels of administration in the state (NRW) and district level

Starting point/Challenge

- Ebola outbreak in West Africa
- How can suspected cases be identified
- Who “confirms” a suspected case
- Who is responsible and capable for the transfer of a suspected case to the treatment centre

Approach

- utilization of existing structures
- crisis management group organized by the fire service (together with the public health authority)
- Implementation of a working group Infectious diseases
- joint instruction between public health department and fire service (local level)
- no such planning on district and state level

Output

- joint instruction between public health department and fire service for the preclinical treatment and transfer of highly infectious patients i.e. EVD
- Involvement of the physicians of the isolation unit at the university hospital

Lessons

- concerted instructions between the ambulance service and the local health authority were crucial
- public health physicians as gatekeepers (before a case becomes a suspected case of i.e. EVD)
- using existing structures
- crisis management group to coordinate the operation

Follow up/open questions

- training of major stakeholders (public health and emergency physicians) must be maintained
- revision of the procedures according to the epidemiological situation
- decisions on district and state level are lacking