

CONGO FEVER UNDER CONTROL, SAYS DEPARTMENT

January 25, 2013

The department of health is confident that it has adequate systems in place to prevent more cases of Congo Fever, should they emerge. This follows the treatment of two Congo Fever patients in the province recently.

This year Johannes Ngwato, an employee of the department of economic development, tourism and environmental affairs was diagnosed with the fever. He was admitted at the Rosepark Hospital. He was successfully treated and released a few days later.

In another case businessman, Tommy Marx, was admitted in critical condition at the Life-Rosepark Hospital. Marx developed symptoms of Congo Fever after been bitten in one of his fingers by a Hyalomma tick.

Congo Fever causes fever, headaches and arthritic-type symptoms. It occurs in wild and pet animals and also affects humans. It is common in East and West Africa. Clinically the disease is rare in mammals but commonly severe in infected humans with over 30 percent mortality rate.

Symptoms of this virus may include; abdominal pains, back pains, fever, chills, severe headaches, joint pains, nausea, vomiting and red eyes. In three days, the infected person may develop a rash, skin lesion that look like bruises or broken blood vessels in the skin.

This lesion may be on the palate. Severe symptoms include excessive sleepiness or drowsiness “As a province we have systems in place that will ensure that cases of that nature are controlled. The person found with this fever symptom is taken into isolation and necessary tests are performed. This process simply includes taking blood samples for test and if anything is found the patient is treated accordingly,” said health Spokesperson, Teboho Oepeng.

People who came in contact with Ngwato were sent to their home with instructions to monitor their temperature for any symptoms of the fever. None of them have reported any symptoms. Both the departments of health and economic development have given the public the assurance that there was no threat of the disease spreading in the province.

According to research, Congo Fever is a rare disease in South Africa. Eight sporadic primary cases were reported from 1981 to September 1984.

This outbreak was reported at the Tygerberg Hospital where eight patients were diagnosed and two of them died. Four of them were seriously ill and two had a mild illness. In the Free State, the recent reported case was in 2009.

The Kalkfontein Dam Nature Reserve is now in operation after it was closed for risk assessment of the virus.

[Source: www.theweekly.co.za]