Doctors Without Borders: Social Media Crisis Communications and the Ebola Outbreak

Wayne Leung
Digital Communications Officer
Doctors Without Borders Canada

Presentation to the Social Media and Society Conference 2015
July 28, 2015

@MSF_Canada | @wayleu
Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF):

One of the world's leading independent international medical relief organizations; providing medical aid where it is needed most in a manner that is independent, neutral and impartial.

Currently working in close to 70 countries worldwide.
Doctors Without Borders
2014 Ebola Response by the numbers:

- 8,534 people admitted to MSF EMCS
- 5,062 people confirmed as having Ebola
- 2,403 people recovered from Ebola in our centres

- MSF established 15 Ebola management centres and transit centres
- Antimalarial medications provided to 2.45 million people in household distributions in Monrovia and Freetown
- 1/3 of all confirmed Ebola cases in this outbreak were cared for by MSF
- MSF shipped more than 1,400 tonnes of equipment to the affected countries, including 530,000 protective suits
@MSF Don't exaggerate. #Ebola can kill up to 90% of those infected and in this particular outbreak fatality rate is less than 67%. #Ebola

@MSF Dynamics of this outbreak are actually very similar to those of past #Ebola outbreaks. In numbers smaller than the biggest outbreaks,

@Richvn @MSF We need to be objective, yes. #Ebola
Here's a visual guide to how we are responding to the #Ebola epidemic in #Guinea msf.ca/en/article/gui...
LIVE CHAT: The facts behind Ebola

Tuesday at 8 p.m. ET, join Dr. Tim Jagatic, Adrienne Arsenault and Stephanie Jenzer with your questions about Ebola.

CBC News explored the facts behind Ebola and answered questions from CBC readers during a live chat Tuesday evening.

This chat featured:

- Dr. Tim Jagatic, who works with Doctors Without Borders and recently returned to Windsor, Ont., from caring for patients exposed to Ebola in Sierra Leone.
- The National correspondent Adrienne Arsenault, who was in Liberia covering the effects of the epidemic there.
- Producer Stephanie Jenzer, who was also part of CBC’s Liberia team.

Hey, there! Welcome to our chat. We’re fortunate to have Dr. Tim Jagatic, The National correspondent Adrienne Arsenault and producer Stephanie Jenzer. They’ll answer your questions about the Ebola virus disease (E.V.D.) Ask away!

by CBC News October 21, 2014 at 8:00 PM

Do we have to be afraid in Canada?

by rene October 21, 2014 at 8:02 PM

the simple answer is no. we have a very strong public health infrastructure in place that will allow us to prevent this virus from becoming an outbreak, also we have the benefit of a well educated public in canada that understands what viruses are and how to avoid them ie wash hands, keeping your distance etc

by timjagatic October 21, 2014 at 8:04 PM

I work for Doctors Without Borders - ask me anything about Ebola.

submitted 10 months ago * by ELasry
#Ebola: The failure of the international response: slow, lacking leadership, irresponsible. msf.ca/en/article/ebo…

For some, #Ebola is akin to magic. MSF doctors on the outbreak in West Africa msf.ca/en/article/som…
Isata, 22 mnths: youngest #Ebola patient to recover/be discharged from our centre #SierraLeone thestar.com/news/world/201…

Doctors Without Borders/ Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)
Published by Esme Cribb June 27, 2014 Edited July
Sia Bintou spent more than 10 days in MSF’s Ebola treatment center in Guéckédou, Guinea. There were many times when the medical team thought she would not make it, but Bintou beat the disease. Here, staff congratulate her as she is discharged. Up to 90% of people who get Ebola die from the disease. There is no treatment or vaccine for Ebola; medical staff can only provide supportive therapy. Right now, Ebola patients have been identified in more than 60 locations in Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia. MSF is the only aid organization treating people affected by the virus. Photo by Sylvain Cherkaoui/ Cosmos. Read more: http://bit.ly/1yUGaJc

Meet some of the Canadians working for MSF on the front lines of the #Ebola epidemic. msf.ca/en/article/mee…
How Ebola affects everyone else

Carlie Guthrie in Liberia

November 8, 2014

As a logistician, I hire daily workers and contractors to keep our projects functioning. When I first got my assignment, my immediate thought was “...

Blogs, photos and stories from the front line of MSF's emergency medical work

Ebola stigma: another barrier in the battle

Benjamin Black in Sierra Leone

November 7, 2014

Working as a doctor in Sierra Leone a coup in flattery. Not just me, all of us. A team of “s

The closest thing to hell

Cittali Barba in Liberia

November 7, 2014

The first time I entered the high-risk zone, go restricted access to enter a temporary building: gravely ill patients lying on mattresses on the closest thing to hell; far from my usual white

I share my story to show that Ebola is not a death sentence

16 October 2014

5 Comments

It’s been one and a half months since I recovered from the Ebola virus disease. But however I contracted the virus is something that leaves me wondering for the rest of my life. I don’t know whether I contracted it from a relative or a close friend, or by touching something that had been contaminated by an infected person.

I was completely heartbroken when my test result at the MSF’s ELWA-3 Ebola Treatment Unit confirmed I was positive for Ebola. I did not believe it. I cried profusely. This was a turning moment in my life. I did not believe from the onset that Ebola was real. I doubted its existence. But here I was, sitting in an isolation center confirmed for Ebola.

Before I felt sick, my friends and I would hang out at entertainment centers around our community, drinking stout and joking it was Ebola medicine. It was not too long after when I started feeling sick, like symptoms of malaria. Then I started throwing up and I had diarrhea.

My mother thought that I was poisoned. Even still, my family was taking all the necessary precautions even though we were not sure I had Ebola. Whenever I vomited, my wife disinfected and cleaned it away. My wife and my daughter stopped sleeping by me in the same bedroom. To date, I am the only person who got infected in my family, because of these precautions.
“In the end, we did not know what words to use that would make the world wake up and realize how out of control the outbreak had truly become”

- Dr. Bart Janssens, MSF Director of Operations
"We cannot cut off the affected countries and hope this epidemic will simply burn out. To put out this fire we must run into the burning building"
Ebola Comes To America: First U.S. Case Just Diagnosed In Dallas
Doctor in New York City Is Sick With Ebola

By MARC SANTORA  OCT. 23, 2014

A photograph of Dr. Spencer on his LinkedIn page.

I Yam What I Yam
@NvrGet91101

Doctors Without Borders Does Not Exist...
It's Doctors Without Brains. #amirite
#EbolaNYC

James Denman
@thekingmob

Doctors without borders seems to equal doctors without common sense. Good one.

Mark D'Cunha
@mdcunha

Honestly, Doctors without Borders needs to teach some commonsense. Treating Ebola then flying into NYC is #StupidStupidStupid

Michael Barbaro
@mikiebarb

Lot of questions will be raised about Doctors Without Borders protocols for quarantining. CC: @MSF_USA

cup 'o joe 🍵
@JoeNYLaw

The Criminal Negligence of "Doctors Without Borders" may kill millions. #EbolaNYC

Carol Roth 🎈
@caroljsroth

Call me crazy, but I'm kinda preferring doctors WITH borders...
When MSF staff return to the United States from operations in West Africa where our teams are combatting the Ebola outbreak, each staff member goes through a thorough debriefing process, during which they are informed of our guidelines. http://bit.ly/1sfN9x

MSF Protocols for Staff Returning from Ebola-Affected Countries
Since the beginning of its operations in West Africa in March to combat the Ebola outbreak, Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) has put in place stringent protocols to protect its staff from exposure to the Ebola virus and to monitor the health of its returning staff.

"There are other ways to adequately address both public anxiety and health imperatives, and the response to Ebola must not be guided primarily by panic in countries not overly affected by the epidemic," said Sophie Delaunay, executive director of MSF-USA. "Any regulation not based on scientific medical grounds, which would isolate healthy aid workers, will very likely serve as a disincentive to others to combat the epidemic at its source, in West Africa."

The following information has been compiled to address questions about Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) protocols and practices regarding the organization’s Ebola projects in West Africa and the people working in them.

Q & A on MSF’s Ebola Response and Protocols
An MSF staff member wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) while treating a young patient at MSF’s Ebola Treatment Center in Guéckédou, Guinea.

Ebola: Quarantine Can Undermine Efforts to Curb Epidemic
NEW YORK—Forced quarantine of asymptomatic health workers returning from fighting the Ebola outbreak in West Africa is not grounded on scientific evidence...
"Keep up the fight. We are with you!" The MSF team in Juba, South Sudan, show support for their colleagues fighting #Ebola in West Africa.

"Courage!" MSF staff in Katanga, Democratic Republic of Congo, providing pediatric care and malaria treatment, and responding to measles and cholera outbreaks and more, support their colleagues in West Africa fighting Ebola.

"You are not alone!" MSF staff in Kashmir, providing mental health care to people who have suffered decades of conflict, send their support to their colleagues fighting Ebola in West Africa.

"We support you!" MSF staff in Erbil, northern Iraq, running a health clinic offering primary and mental health care to Syrian refugees in Kawargosk camp, support their colleagues fighting Ebola in West Africa.
Excellent and very moving and real. Stay safe.

Indira Fernando 9 months ago

This documentation should get maximum exposure... for the world to understand and appreciate.

Megan Van Alstine 9 months ago

Thanks so much for the great session!
Thank You!

Wayne Leung
Digital Communications Officer
Doctors Without Borders Canada

@MSF_Canada | @wayleu
@doctorswithoutborders | @wyl81
msf.english | wayne.y.leung
MSFCanada
doctorswithoutborders