



## Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice of Men in the Media of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in Guinea

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) is a serious, often fatal disease that is transmitted from wild animals and spreads by human-to-human transmission. Media men have become very influential actors in the response strategies against this disease. The aim of our work was to assess the state of the art on the knowledge, attitudes and practices of media men in the face of EVD.

**Material and Methods:** This was a prospective cross-sectional descriptive study lasting 3 months from 1 October to 31 December, 2016. It was conducted in 11 selected media sites in the city of Conakry. It concerned 332 media men.

**Results:** The male dominated with 55.12% of cases against 44.88% of women and with a sex ratio of 1.22; the average age of the respondents was 27.86 years with extreme ages of 18 and 64 years. Singles were the most common layer in our study with a frequency of 66.27%. All 332 media men surveyed or 100% had a perfect knowledge of the EVD regarding the signs of the disease, the environments and the different modes of transmission.

**Conclusion:** Our study shows that media men and women with Ebola virus presented an acceptable knowledge of the Ebola virus epidemic and learned about the realities by giving themselves the means to learn, understand and to act against the explanations provided by caregivers and victims. An expanded study of the country's interior media (rural radio) would provide a more comprehensive assessment.

**Keywords:** Knowledge; Attitudes; Practices; EVD; Media men

### Introduction

Ebola Virus Disease (EVD), formerly known as Ebola hemorrhagic fever, is a serious, often fatal disease in humans caused by the Ebola virus. The virus is transmitted to humans from wild animals and spreads to populations through human-to-human transmission. The average case fatality rate is around 50%. Community participation is essential for controlling outbreaks [1].

The EVD outbreak in West Africa started in Guinea in December 2013, but was only reported on March 21, 2014, before spreading to neighboring countries (Liberia, Sierra Leone). The epidemic, caused by the strain Zaire of the virus would be the most deadly since the discovery of the first cases in 1976 in Congo [2]. In epidemics such as Ebola, local media can be critically important to people, alerting them to the intensity of the epidemic, the preventive measures and the hygiene rules to follow in trying to stop [3]. Lack of information or clumsiness of information has had a role in people's behavior in the face of the epidemic. The important information obviously concerns the disease, how it is transmitted and not transmitted [4].

We are talking about the media to describe all means of disseminating information to the public. There are 4 media groups that differ from each other in the support that is used to convey information: print, online press, broadcast media, audio-visual media (television), every media so has its own way of handling and presenting information. This is not without influence on how the public receives the information. The journalist's job is to collect, verify and comment on information in order to offer it to the public. The journalist is strongly linked to his audience: it is useless without public and the public is not informed if there is no journalist [5].

The image, the perception that people have of a contagious virus like Ebola comes from intense

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media coverage. The disease conveys a very strong image. This triggers an emotional reaction that affects our ability to reason logically [6]. Quality information plays a determining role in people's behavior in the face of the Ebola epidemic, both on the ground and in the world. This is the conclusion of Bruno Jochum (director of Médecins Sans Frontières Switzerland interview with Dominique Jaccard) [4]. Insufficient training, panic, propaganda, mistrust remain the most observed attitudes among media men [7-10]. In Guinea, there has not yet been a descriptive study on the knowledge, attitude and practices of media men against EVD. This lack of previous study among media men, the assessment of the level of knowledge of media men on the EVD, the description of the attitudes and practices observed by media men in the context of the prevention of EVD have motivated the choice of this theme: knowledge, attitudes and practice of media men in the face of EVD. Our overall goal for the realization of this work was to assess the knowledge, attitudes and practices of media men regarding Ebola virus disease.

It was specifically about:

- Describe the socio-demographic profile of Media Men;
- Evaluate the level of knowledge of media men about the Ebola virus disease;
- Describe the attitudes and practices observed by media men in the context of the prevention of Ebola virus disease.

## Materials and Methods

The city of Conakry provided the framework for the realization of this study. It was realized in eleven (11) media sites in the city of Conakry namely: Radio-Television Guinean (RTG), Nostalgia FM, Chérie FM and TATV, Evasion, Continentale FM, Horoya, Horizon FM, Aminata.com, the newspaper the Lynx, Gangan Group, Guinea news. The media men of the city of Conakry were the subject of this study and for the collection of data; we used a pre-established survey form. This was a prospective cross-sectional descriptive study of three (03) months from October 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016. All media men in the city of Conakry formed the target population, the study population being those of the 11 selected sites in the city of Conakry. Included in this study were all media men from the 11 selected sites in the city of Conakry who freely agreed to participate in the study regardless of gender, age and source. However, not all media men in the city of Conakry who refused to participate in our study or were absent were included in this study.

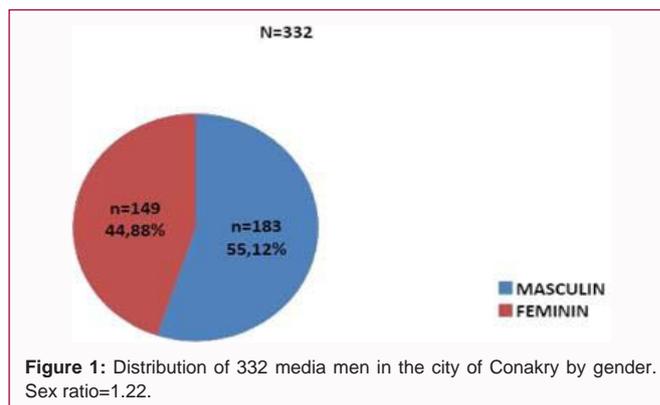
Random sampling at two (2) levels was performed:

Level 1: The simple random selection of media in the city of Conakry has been done among the media in Guinea.

Level 2: The systematic random selection of Media Men in each of the media houses using the structure breakdown was made so that each Media Man has the same chance of being shot.

The first media man considered starting point was randomly selected by drawing a number between 1 and 5. After choosing the corresponding Media Man, all other media men in the sample were selected chosen according to the sampling rate from this one. This procedure was followed by their distribution until the necessary sample was obtained.

Sample size: A base sample was chosen with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error.



**Table 1:** Distribution of 332 Media Men in the City of Conakry by Age Group.

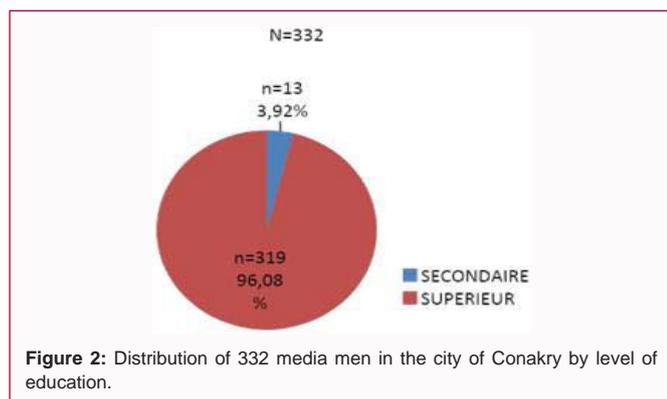
| Age range    | Effective | Percentage |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Less than 19 | 6         | 1.81       |
| 20-29        | 241       | 72.59      |
| 30-39        | 65        | 19.58      |
| 40-49        | 7         | 2.11       |
| 50-59        | 6         | 1.81       |
| 60 and over  | 7         | 2.11       |
| Total        | 332       | 100        |

Mean: 27.86 years; SD: 7.92; Min: 18 years; Max: 64 years; Extremes: 18 to 64 years

The total workforce was 611 of Media Men in these 11 media sites including 300 at RTG; 35 at Nostalgie FM, 30 at Chérie FM and TATV, 95 at Evasion, 25 at Continentale FM, 20 at Horoya, 30 at Horizon FM, 20 at Aminata.com, 15 at Le Lynx, 26 at Gangan, 15 at Guinea news. The sample size is 332 Media Men. After obtaining the agreement of the authorities of each structure, we proceeded to a confidential interview of the Men of media after explanation of the objectives of the study and the method of filling of the form. Media men randomly selected who were traveling for field missions were replaced by other media men of the same structure. The data collection was done using a survey form developed on the basis of our objectives and comprising questions subdivided into 3 modules namely: Socio demographic profiles; knowledge about EVD and attitudes and practices to EVD. The collection was carried out by a team of 5 investigators including three students in thesis. The variables studied were the qualitative variables and the quantitative variables. Office Pack 2013 software (Word, Excel, Power point) and SPSS 22 were used for data entry, processing and presentation. Before any questionnaire was administered, the informed consent of each of those surveyed was obtained. We reassured them of the confidentiality that was observed throughout this study, and informed them that they could withdraw at any time from the study without constraint. In addition, the lack of publication on the subject among media men in Guinea and the non-availability of certain media men were our main difficulties during this study.

## Results

The male dominated with 55.12% of media men against 44.88% of women and with a sex ratio of 1.22 (Figure 1 and Table 1); the average age of the respondents was 27.86 years with extreme age of 18-64 years. Singles were the most common layer in our study with a frequency of 66.27%. All 332 media men surveyed or 100% had a perfect knowledge of the EVD regarding the signs of the disease, the



**Figure 2:** Distribution of 332 media men in the city of Conakry by level of education.

**Table 2:** Distribution of 332 Media Men by Level of Knowledge of EVD.

| MVE Knowledge            | Effective N=332 | Percentage |
|--------------------------|-----------------|------------|
| MVE Knowledge            | 332             | 100        |
| MVE Signs                | 332             | 100        |
| Media or Transmission    | 332             | 100        |
| Transmission mode        | 332             | 100        |
| MVE Healing              | 313             | 94.28      |
| Contagious after Healing | 83              | 25         |

**Table 3:** Distribution of 332 Media Men in the City of Conakry by Type of Media.

| Type of Media                 | Effective | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Written press                 | 33        | 9.94       |
| Online press                  | 41        | 12.35      |
| Radio                         | 182       | 54.82      |
| Television                    | 45        | 13.55      |
| Radio-TV                      | 28        | 8.43       |
| Radio-television-press online | 3         | 0.9        |
| Total                         | 332       | 100        |

**Table 4:** Distribution of 332 media men in the city of Conakry according to their appreciation of the level of severity of the EVD.

| Gravity of EVD | Effective | Percentage |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Not serious    | 10        | 3.01       |
| Serious        | 129       | 38.86      |
| Very serious   | 193       | 58.13      |
| Total          | 332       | 100        |

environments and the different modes of transmission. Regarding the cure of EVD; 94.28% had knowledge of this aspect and 25% knew that after healing the healed people will always be contagious (Table 2). 56.33% of media men said that their structure was prepared to deal with EVD. 82.23% of Media Men had good behavior against 17.77%. 53.92% of respondents said they would welcome people healed gently but apprehensively. Some of the media men said that their structure was at risk after the epidemic in 37.35% of cases.

## Discussion

Several studies concerning the knowledge on the attitude and the practices related to the EVD were carried out at the level of several social layers, but never at the Men of media. Yet this socio professional layer plays a very important role in strategies to counter EVD and is therefore a very influential player in the eradication of this scourge.

Despite the difficulties encountered during our study, we were

able to investigate 332 media men, 55.12% of whom were male compared to 44.88% female with a sex ratio of 1.22. This study has shown that the profession of journalism has more men than women. Our result is lower than that found by Sandouno [9]. Which found a male predominance with a rate of 58% and higher than that found by Ndiaye [10] with a proportion of 50.8%.

The average age of the Media Men was 27.86 years with the extremes of 18 and 64 years; the most common age group was 20 to 29 years old with 72.59%; this survey shows that young adults are the most likely to do this job which requires a lot of research and travel. In our series, singles are the most found with a proportion of 66.27% followed by married couples with a proportion of 32.83%; this sector of activity is mainly occupied by young people who start their first job after their training and do not have enough resources yet to get married. This result is much higher than that reported by Ndiaye [10] who found 14.20% of singles in his study conducted in Senegal in 2015 and Sandouno [9] in his study on the knowledge, attitude and practices related to EVD in the community of three sub-prefectures of Kouroussa in 2015 which reported a frequency of 19.5.

The profession of journalism requires professional training, so 96.08% of Media Men had a higher level, only 3.92% of these men have a secondary level (Figure 2). This result could be explained by the requirements of the profession in terms of qualified training. Our result is higher than that of Ndiaye [10] who found that 2.40% of his respondents had a higher level of education while Sandouno [9] found a percentage of 11.6%. There are more radios in Conakry; this would explain the predominance of Radio Media Men and the increase in the number of radios in our country with a proportion of 54.82% of our series, followed by 13.55% from those of the television (Table 3).

As for the knowledge of the EVD, all Media Men (100%) surveyed had a good level of knowledge of the EVD, regarding signs, backgrounds and different modes of transmission. This could be explained by the fact that it is the educated people, trained to inform and inform the population. Our result is superior to those reported by Sandouno [9] and Ndiaye [10] who found that 36.3% and 1.3% of their study population were familiar with EVD.

More than half (96.99%) of media men surveyed recognize the severity of EVD (58.13% for very serious and 38.86% for severe) (Table 4). In this environment the gravity of this pathology did not go unnoticed. This result is inferior to that found by Ndiaye [10] who reported that 96.8% of his respondents thought the EVD was very serious.

Their source of information was most often radio, television and newspapers with respectively the proportions of 86.75%, 77.11% and 69.88% (Table 5). These sources are the most used and most accessible

**Table 5:** Distribution of 332 media men in the city of Conakry according to the information source on the EVD.

| Source           | Effect if N=332 | Percentage |
|------------------|-----------------|------------|
| Radio            | 288             | 86.75      |
| Television       | 256             | 77.11      |
| News paper       | 232             | 69.88      |
| Public screamers | 68              | 20.48      |
| Health agents    | 156             | 46.99      |
| Community agents | 75              | 22.59      |
| Education/school | 44              | 13.25      |

communication channels for the population. This would explain their very important involvement by the media in raising awareness and combating EVD. Our result is lower than that found by Sandouno [9] which reported a percentage of 94.4% and higher than that of Ndiaye [10]; 64.9% of their populations had heard it through radio. Alerts and EVD cases concerned the structures of 21.08% of media men surveyed. According to the attitudes aimed at preparing for a risk of Ebola, 56.33% of media men claim to be well prepared through the respect of the rules of hygiene and awareness of all in their structure against 39.76% who say the opposite about their structure. These results show that although hand wash kits and control of inputs and outputs were rules, some structures escape.

The good behavior to take in case of suspicion of a case of EVD is one of the measures aimed at alerting and preventing from being in contact with a suspected case of EVD, 82.23% of the Media Men are aware of these good behaviors against 17.77% who were unaware of measures to prevent contact with a suspicious case. This could be explained on the one hand by the fact that it was not.

## Conclusion

We cannot deny the social and cultural importance of the media in the modern world. In Guinea, our study highlighted the knowledge and attitudes of media people about Ebola virus disease; By giving them an acceptable knowledge of the Ebola virus epidemic, because they have learned about the realities by getting to work, by learning about what happened, by giving themselves the means to know, understand and to act against the explanations provided by caregivers and victims. Clearly the Guinean press played a key role, doubled responsibility. The journalist is strongly linked to his audience and it is useless without public and the public is not informed if there is no journalist.

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