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Home > What does the public know about Ebola? The public's risk perceptions regarding the current Ebola outbreak in an as-yet unaffected country (paper)

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Original

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25920703>

[1]

Target

Government and Public Health [2]

Healthcare Professionals [3]

Topic

Stakeholders [4]

Tags

Ebola [5]

Risk perception [6]

*Gesser-Edelsburg A, Shir-Raz Y, Hayek S,
Sassoni-Bar Lev O. Am J Infect Control. 2015
Jul 1;43(7):669-75.*

Background: The unexpected developments surrounding the Ebola virus in the United States provide yet another warning that we need to establish communication preparedness. This study examines what the Israeli public knew about Ebola after the initial stages of the outbreak in a country to which Ebola has not spread and assesses the association between knowledge versus worries and concerns about contracting Ebola.

Methods: Online survey using Google Docs (Google, Mountain View, CA) of Israeli health care professionals and the general public (N =

327).

Results: The Israeli public has knowledge about Ebola (mean \pm SD, 4.18 ± 0.83), despite the fact that the disease has not spread to Israel. No statistically significant difference was found between health care workers versus non-health care workers in the knowledge score. Additionally, no statistically significant association was found between knowledge and worry levels. The survey indicated that Israelis expect information about Ebola from the health ministry, including topics of uncertainty. More than half of the participants thought the information provided by the health ministry on Ebola and Ebola prevention was insufficient (50.5% and 56.4%, respectively), and almost half (45.2% and 41.1%, respectively) were unsure if the information was sufficient.

Conclusion: The greatest challenges that the organizations face is not only to convey knowledge, but also to find ways to convey comprehensive information that reflects uncertainty and empowers the public to make fact-based decisions about health.

Link to [full text](#) [7]

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Links

- [1] <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25920703>
- [2] <http://www.asset-scienceinsociety.eu/target/government-and-public-health>
- [3] <http://www.asset-scienceinsociety.eu/target/healthcare-professionals>
- [4] <http://www.asset-scienceinsociety.eu/topic/stakeholders>
- [5] <http://www.asset-scienceinsociety.eu/tags/ebola>
- [6] <http://www.asset-scienceinsociety.eu/tags/risk-perception>
- [7] [http://www.ajicjournal.org/article/S0196-6553\(15\)00150-9/fulltext](http://www.ajicjournal.org/article/S0196-6553(15)00150-9/fulltext)