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Should we restrict travel traffic through Ebola affected Countries?

Our country has had its battles in the past with many diseases like Syphilis, Diphtheria and Tuberculosis. Now we are on the brink of an age that is affected by more uncontrollable diseases. The Ebola virus is one of these that we have no vaccine for. Ebola, or Hemorrhagic fever, stemming from Africa has now become mobile with the human’s ability to travel intercontinentally. This faces us with important decisions about how to prevent such a deadly virus to spread worldwide. The United States has already had its first cases and secondary transmissions cases due to the outbreak in African countries Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia. We live in a time where vaccines are a routine part of life, but what happens when we are faced with something that we don’t have a vaccine for? The CDC (Center for Disease Control) typically decides the standard operating procedures to deal with outbreaks. The latest outbreak even caught the CDC off guard and the procedures were rolled out after the first case had been reported. Now, by taking many precautions and screenings at international travel points the CDC is hoping to control this new mobility of Ebola. How far can screenings go is the question on many people’s minds. Some politicians like Governor Jindal have urged President Obama to close the travel to these African countries and seal us from the virus coming to the United States. Does this gives us the protection we need from the spread of this virus or are we putting of the inevitable?

Human nature is to protect ourselves and is one of the strongest instincts we have. Does that instinct make the decision to cut off all travel to countries that are a potential threat justified? We all want to feel safe and like the idea of no threats in the world. This primal instinct even makes the brightest of our society make decisions that may not be the most logical. This way of thinking brings us to “Prevention is better than Control” (Salzberg). The idea that prevention is the key to the whole spread of Ebola is a great in theory. We are always taught that prevention is the way for us to control getting sick. Most of us wash our hands after we use a tissue or before we eat, because this is what we have been taught. Generally, this is great for your day-to-day precautionary measures from sickness. Should we take such drastic measures to cut off these countries to save ourselves from Ebola? This makes the interesting case of logic over primal instinct.

Isolating ourselves from those African countries that are Ebola stricken can give us piece of mind. The people in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia need medical supplies. Making the decisions about travel restrictions to these particular areas might force US citizens to take drastic measures to return home. That fear that we all feel when threatened is that same primal instinct. President Obama wants to keep travel open to these African countries. This will allow the US military and humanitarians to take supplies over and help the people that are on the front lines of this disease. The spread of Ebola has already moved intercontinentally and has shown up in Spain and the US. Predictions show that if we isolate our country and disengage from taking supplies thru the use of the Red Cross and the US military then the disease will become so rampant that it will eventually hit US soil. The fact that it was already come to the US via air travel means that isolation might not be the best way to Keep Ebola from the US. The prediction models used are based on if we discontinue all air and water travel including transports that are carrying needed humanitarian aid supplies. The medical supplies that are needed to fight Ebola head on, are simply over a couple of borders in neighboring countries. Some of these countries are as close as Nigeria which has closed all air travel to Ebola affected countries.

The US based company Johnson & Johnson have teamed up with an English medical supply manufacture to develop the first Ebola vaccine. The clinical test phase models are showing that the vaccine could be available as soon as early 2014. This travel ban that includes supplies transports that could carry this vaccine might make the spread of the virus even worse. We can allow supply travel to continue with the much needed supplies and restrict personal travel to these areas. This idea would allow the scientist into the area of ground zero where the patient zero was found and continues the study and development of more potent vaccines to follow.

The thought of being able to give the help these people need means we will then, be able to become the biggest part of the solution. This idea would still give Americans the peace of mind that we are safe. After the models that have been used to show the spread of Ebola, fighting it head on seems to be the strongest defense in the war on Ebola. Do we stand and fight Ebola with all we have and support the death to Ebola or can we sit and watch while these people parish in the outbreaks.

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1. Describe the feedback you got on your presentation and on your rough draft during peer review.

The feedback I was given on my rough draft was there was a bit of confusion about the virus already hitting the US and what kind of travel restrictions are in place from other countries.

1. Who is your think tank audience?  How did you revise your paper to make it more appealing and persuasive to the think tank as your audience?

The Brookings Institution was my audience. I added more information about research and the types of travel restrictions in place.

1. How well do you think you have met the criteria for this paper?

I think I did well on hitting the criteria