

Ebola virus preys on human caretaking behaviors for transmission

As the [Ebola epidemic](#) in West Africa has [spiraled out of control](#), affecting thousands of Liberians, Sierra Leonians, and Guineans, and threatening thousands more, [the world's reaction has been glacially](#), lethally slow. Only in the past few weeks have [heads of state begun to take serious notice](#).

To date, the virus has killed more than [2,600 people](#). This is a comparatively small number when measured against much more established diseases such as [malaria](#), [HIV/AIDS](#), influenza, and so on.

[But] the most striking thing about the virus is the way in which it propagates. True, through bodily fluids, but to suggest as much is to ignore the conditions under which bodily contact occurs. Instead, the mechanism Ebola exploits is far more insidious. This virus preys on care and love, piggybacking on the deepest, most distinctively human virtues.

Affected parties are almost all medical professionals and family members, snared by Ebola while in the business of caring for their fellow humans. More strikingly, [75 percent of Ebola victims are women](#), people who do much of the care work throughout Africa and the rest of the world. In short, Ebola parasitizes our humanity.

More than most other pandemic diseases (malaria, cholera, plague, etc.) and more than airborne diseases (influenza, swine flu, H5N1, etc.) that are transmitted indiscriminately through the air, this disease is passed through very minute amounts of bodily fluid. Just a slip of contact with the infected party and the caregiver herself can be stricken.

Read the full, original story: [The most terrifying thing about Ebola](#)