

## Ebola survivors' blood might hold key to a cure

The first clinical trials are starting in West Africa to test whether transfusing patients with plasma or blood donated by Ebola survivors is safe and effective in reducing illness and death.

The hope is that antibodies against Ebola that are present in survivors' blood might have a protective effect in those infected with the virus. Although some patients have been given such 'convalescent' blood or plasma alongside other care, it is unclear whether it is safe and effective because no proper clinical trials have yet been done.

The therapy would have the advantage that [it could be scaled up quickly](#) — there are now thousands of people who have survived Ebola in West Africa, many of whom are potential donors. By comparison, the Ebola vaccines that are currently under development might not be produced and deployed fast enough to help in the current epidemic, even if they prove to be effective. There is also no approved drug treatment for Ebola, which in this epidemic has a fatality rate of around 70 percent.

The first trial of the convalescent therapy began in Liberia with the collection of plasma from survivors at the ELWA 2 hospital in Monrovia and the transfusion of the trial's first patient.

The trial is being funded by the Seattle-based Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation as part of its U.S. \$5.7-million support for developing and testing experimental Ebola treatments. It is being organized by ClinicalRM, a contract research organization in Hinckley, Ohio, in coordination with national health authorities and the World Health Organization (WHO).

**Read full, original article:** [First trials of blood-based Ebola therapy kick off](#)