

## As cases decline, experts stress urgency of Ebola vaccine clinical trials in West Africa

As authorities and drug companies hurriedly prepare to begin testing Ebola vaccines in West Africa, they are starting to contemplate a new challenge: whether an ebbing of the outbreak could make it more difficult to determine if the experimental vaccines are effective.

“For this reason, it’s very urgent that we get into the field very quickly to do these clinical trials, because if there are very, very, very few cases of Ebola, as I’m sure you understand, it’s going to be difficult to test whether the vaccines work or not,” Dr. Helen Rees, an adviser to the World Health Organization, said during a news conference on Friday at the organization’s headquarters in Geneva.

There has been debate over how to conduct the studies. Some experts say testing the vaccines against a placebo would be the surest way to determine whether they work. Others counter that it would be unethical to administer a placebo during a deadly epidemic.

The trials will cover all the approaches, with different designs in each country. In Liberia, the Merck and Glaxo vaccines will be tested against each other and against a control, with about 9,000 people in each of the three arms of the study.

**Read full, original article:** [In Africa, a Decline in New Ebola Cases Complicates Vaccine Development](#)