

Why it's difficult to declare the end of an Ebola outbreak

The World Health Organization on [July 24] declared the [official end of the latest outbreak of Ebola](#) in the [Democratic Republic of the Congo](#), which tallied 54 cases, including 33 deaths. But a study published...in the *Lancet Infectious Diseases* highlights just how tenuous such declarations can be when it comes to Ebola.

The study, led by researchers at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [traced a puzzling cluster of Ebola cases](#) in Liberia to a mother who appeared to have had a stealthy, undiagnosed infection for more than a year. The cluster came to light when the woman's 15-year-old son arrived at a hospital in Monrovia on November 17, 2015—more than two months after the country had been declared free of the disease in the wake of a massive outbreak that began in 2013.

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Such a scenario isn't unheard of for Ebola. Earlier studies have found that the virus [can lurk in men's semen](#) for up to 18 months after a victim recovers. It has also been spotted in the vaginal fluids and breast milk of asymptomatic women.

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While researchers say such poorly understood, stealthy cases are rare, they still "highlight the risk of Ebola virus disease flare-ups even after an outbreak is declared over." They urge continued vigilance and surveillance.

Read full, original post: [Ebola mysteriously hid in a woman for more than a year before spreading](#)