



A Barrier for Good

Vinyl's Role in Infection Control - The West Africa Ebola Outbreak

The Ebola outbreak in West Africa was first reported in March 2014, and it rapidly became the deadliest occurrence of the disease since its discovery in 1976. In fact, the epidemic killed five times more people than all other known Ebola outbreaks combined.

More than 21 months after the first confirmed case, 11,315 fatalities were reported in six countries; Liberia, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, the US and Mali. The total number of reported cases was over 28,000.

During the crisis, plastics companies ramped up production of medical supplies for use in fighting the virus. A number of these companies donated their products and covered shipping costs to get medical supplies to the World Health Organization and other groups working on the ground in infected areas.

Vinyl and plastic medical supplies, including gloves, goggles, and personal protection suits helped healthcare professionals and caregivers in providing care to Ebola-afflicted patients. Vinyl is used because it is impermeable to air and fluids, difficult to puncture, easy to maintain, and withstands repeated exposure to the disinfectants used to clean patient-care facilities. Caregivers wearing protective gear were able to safely be near patients to administer care and comfort. Containment units, which are individual beds encased with clear vinyl, meanwhile helped keep patients comfortable while not isolated in their surroundings.



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