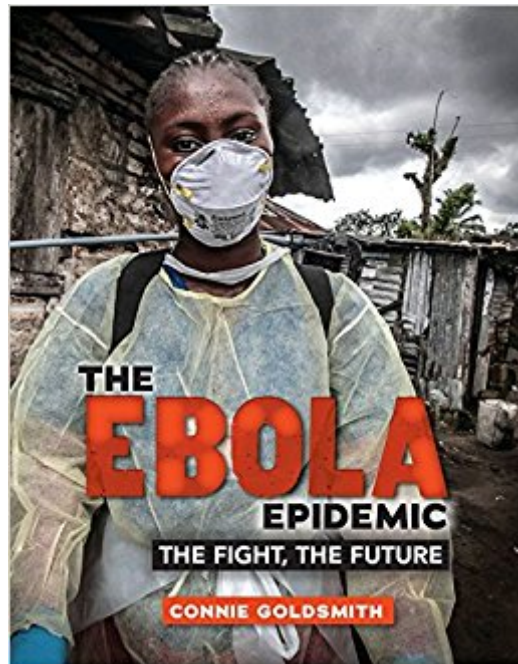


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# The Ebola Epidemic: The Fight, The Future



## Synopsis

An ordinary blue thermos holding blood samples from a sick nun in Zaire reached Belgium's Institute of Tropical Medicine in September 1976. From the samples, researchers discovered a new virus, which they named the Ebola virus after a river in Central Africa. The virus killed two hundred eighty people before it seemingly disappeared into the jungle. No one suspected the virus would erupt in West Africa nearly four decades later to cause an unprecedented epidemic. Ebola has riveted and terrified the world since its reemergence from the jungle, killing more than eleven thousand people in West Africa since December 2013. Transmitted through bodily fluids blood, saliva, sweat, vomit, feces, and semen the disease causes high fever, widespread pain, nausea and vomiting, and severe diarrhea. Patients may develop dangerous bleeding and organ failure. With no effective treatment available, about 40 percent of infected people die within days. Using proper protective gear, safe burial protocols, cleansing techniques, and educational outreach, the disease has been slowed in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone at least temporarily. Can researchers develop vaccines quickly enough to prevent new outbreaks? Will Ebola move beyond West Africa? Readers will hear from Ebola survivors, learn what experts say about this devastating disease, and draw their own conclusions about whether another epidemic can be prevented.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Connie Goldsmith writes books about history, health, and science for older children. An RN with a master's degree in health, Ms. Goldsmith lives near Sacramento, California.

The most unusual virus didn't yet have a name, a name that could set one into a panic by the mere mention of it. Dr. Piot was clueless and began to study the virus in 1976. He had no idea he was playing with fire when a Thermos he opened had "one of the most dangerous viruses that science would ever identify" ... Ebola. Ebola had reared its ugly head inside a mission in Yambuku in the Congo. It had already killed a couple hundred people and the Belgian nun, whose blood was sent in that Thermos, knew she was going to die. The World Health Organization (WHO) began to suspect this new virus was no ordinary one and ordered the samples to "a high-security lab in England." Ebola was a virus that needed a bit more scrutiny than Dr. Piot and his colleagues could give it. There were no precautions taken initially, but there were plenty of questions about the virus, which turned out to be "closely related to Marburg." Indeed, this was a virus to be feared. Doctors and researchers needed to find out the who, what, when, and where surrounding the Ebola virus. One thing for certain was that the "virus had in all likelihood been amplified and spread by [the mission nuns] own practices and lack of proper training." Both Ebola and Marburg were hemorrhagic viruses, deadly and mega-scary with extremely high mortality rates. In reality, as frightening as the Ebola virus is, it's not an efficient virus "one can only be infected via bodily fluids of an infected person or animal." So why the rapid, widespread transmission? It didn't take long to figure out the answer to that question. There were several reasons, including the fact that "bats may be a natural reservoir for the Ebola virus." Bats were considered a delicacy and when they were served up, Ebola went with them. When people died, their bodies were "highly contagious in the hours and days after death." Naturally, their families wanted to follow custom and take care of the dead by washing them, holding, and touching them, yet another way to spread the dreaded disease. There was much work to be done, including finding patient zero, "the first known case of a new outbreak." This fact alone would give doctors and researchers clues as to how the virus worked and how it spread. The World Health Organization was a bit dismissive, thinking everything was under control, but they were, unfortunately, sadly mistaken. The once small outbreak began to spread and the health-care workers and doctors quickly became overwhelmed with the many thousands of cases they

encountered. There would be no international response if everyone looked the other way. Hundreds were dying, including those who rushed in to save them. The entire world would soon be at risk if something wasn't done to halt the Ebola epidemic, but how could a handful of people cry out for help? This is a fascinating tale of the medical mystery of the Ebola virus that will mesmerize its young audience. In fact, anyone interested in learning about the history of the virus will find this important book fascinating. Although many of us who experienced Ebola paranoia would be better off if we learned more about the fear we were facing. There's a lot of history in this book, but also a lot of hope. There are many interesting sidebars that are mini-tales in themselves. For example, we learn about young twenty-two-year-old Fatu Kekula who put her knowledge about the Ebola virus to work ... to save her family. The layout pops with numerous photographs, maps, charts, and some very sobering photographs. There is a stunning microphotograph of the virus itself. I've read several of Connie Goldsmith's works, all for young middle- and high-school students, each one seemingly more interesting than the last one. They are quite comprehensive, well-researched, and will certainly hold the attention of the intended audience, including the reluctant reader. One very interesting statement, that will make people really ponder epidemics stated that "Borders are only lines on a map, after all, and we cannot be complacent." In the back of the book is an index, a glossary, expansive source notes, a selected bibliography, and additional recommended book, video, website, and organizations to explore. This book courtesy of the publisher.

This is a clear and insightful book about the Ebola virus. Though written for older children and teens, adults will also find it a great resource. Goldsmith covers what the virus is, the current understanding of where it originated, the devastating outbreak in West Africa, the international response, new treatments, and what might happen in the future. Goldsmith does a great job of giving the facts, and her compassion for the health care workers and the patients and families of victims shines through. Highly recommended.

Connie Goldsmith has a wonderful skill for taking difficult topics and making them accessible and compelling for young readers. She separates fact and fiction in a concise, interesting style that will make readers say, "Wow! I didn't know that." Librarians and teachers will find this book a wonderful resource for teens who will be intrigued with the personal stories, vivid photographs and graphs. Highly recommended!!!

Connie Goldsmith's in-depth description of Ebola, her empathy for the patients who contract it, and her admiration for the health-care professionals who treat it is evident in this comprehensive book for teens. Ripped from the headlines, this new title makes connections between science, social science, mathematics, and critical literacy. A must-have for every high school library.

Beautiful writing; clear explanations; personal stories; stunning photos, maps, and charts bring sharp focus to the Ebola crisis. This is an excellent book, not only for teens, but for all ages. It is a book containing history, mystery, science, medicine, and is a must-have for school and public libraries, for doctors' offices and classrooms. Not to be missed!

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