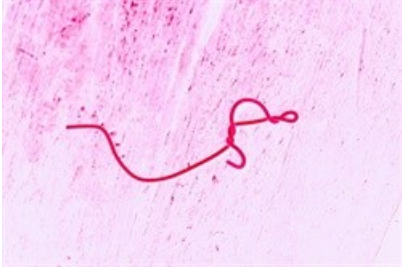


# Ebola survivors' blood may hold possible treatment

A WHO expert meeting in September recommended convalescent blood therapies as one of the most promising strategies meriting urgent evaluation as treatment of Ebola disease. Because of the current outbreak, there are also substantial numbers of survivors from whom to prepare Ebola plasma.



© rueangrit srisuk – [123RF.com](https://123RF.com)

An international research consortium led by the Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp will assess whether treatment with antibodies in the blood of Ebola survivors could help infected patients to fight off the disease. If proven effective, this straightforward intervention could be scaled up in the short term and provide an urgently needed treatment option for patients in West Africa.

The researchers receive €2.9 million of European Union (EU) funding to evaluate the safety and efficacy of treatment with blood and plasma made from the blood of recovered Ebola patients.

ITM's Johan van Griensven, the project's coordinating investigator, said, "Blood and plasma therapy are medical interventions with a long history, safely used for other infectious diseases. We want to find out whether this approach works for Ebola, is safe and can be put into practice to reduce the number of deaths in the present outbreak. Ebola survivors contributing to curb the epidemic by donating blood could reduce fear of the disease and improve their acceptance in the communities."

Blood and plasma from recovered Ebola patients has been used in a limited number of patients previously. For example, during the 1995 Ebola outbreak in Kikwit, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), seven out of eight patients receiving convalescent whole blood survived. However, whether this was due to the transfusions or to other factors is unclear. There is an urgent need to evaluate this therapy in carefully designed studies according to the highest ethical and scientific standards.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>