

Possible commune animal hosts for monkeypox and ebola viruses in the Tshuapa District, Province of Equateur, Democratic Republic of Congo.

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A reinforced surveillance project of monkeypox was established since four years (October 2010 – September 2014) in the Tshuapa District, Province of Equateur, Democratic Republic of Congo, on behalf of the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of Atlanta, United States of America. Several samples collected each year in the district from suspect cases in men were confirmed at the Institut National de Recherche Bio-Médicale (INRB) and CDC, Atlanta, showing the disease to be endemic in that area. In addition, about 500 wild animals, mainly small mammals, were captured in the Health Zones of Boende and Bokungu to know the species that can be reservoirs for monkeypox viruses. A squirrel so far was found to be positive for monkeypox antibodies. Testing of the samples is still occurring. Then, a lot of samples have been collected from domestic animals in the same health zones to evaluate their capacity in harbouring monkeypox viruses. In the same area where an outbreak of the ebola disease has been confirmed since the beginning of September 2014, first cases are probably due to the consumption of dead domestic and wild animals. In that region, it is possible to have monkeypox and ebola viruses in the same group of animals. Further studies on the ecology of monkeypox in the Tshuapa District should be conducted with very strict precautions. In addition, a surveillance program for the ebola infection should be established as well as in monkeypox.