



CAPT Inger K. Damon, MD, PhD

Ebola Response Team Incident Manager
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

CAPT Inger K. Damon, MD, PhD directs the Division of High-Consequence Pathogens and Pathology in CDC's National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases. She is also a captain in the US Public Health Service.

Dr. Damon is one of the world's foremost experts on orthopoxviruses including smallpox, an infectious disease that killed millions each year until it was eradicated in 1979. Eradication was largely due to the success of global vaccination campaigns. She has served for more than a decade as the director of the World Health Organization Collaborating Center for Smallpox and other Poxviruses at CDC, one of only two worldwide collections of the variola virus which causes smallpox.

Global Outreach

"The same tools we're using to fight Ebola - including development of laboratory tests, vaccines and antivirals, contact tracing, and isolation - were used to wipe out smallpox." As the head of CDC's response to the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, Damon is responsible for establishing a strategic direction and managing the day-to-day operation of the largest international emergency response in CDC history.

High-Containment Labs

Dr. Damon is certified to work in high-containment (BSL-3 and BSL-4) laboratories, and trains others to work in these labs as well. She directs a research program conducted in these high-containment labs with live variola virus. The research is designed to help scientists understand the genomic structure of the virus in order

to develop new smallpox vaccines, spur better tests to diagnose smallpox, and to create better drugs for treatment.

She was lead investigator in the nation's first case of laboratory-acquired smallpox.

Innovation

A major bottleneck in the Ebola response had been the shortage of healthcare workers trained to staff Ebola treatment units where people with Ebola infection might be safely isolated and treated. Dr. Damon and Dr. Stuart Nichol, the chief scientific officer for the response, came up with the idea of a CDC training course to augment MSF Ebola care training efforts. That idea grew into the Preparing Healthcare Workers to Work in Ebola Treatment Units in Africa training course, held in Anniston, Alabama, which opened on October 6 and by the end of 2014 graduated 333 volunteers heading for West Africa.

Dr. Damon graduated from Amherst College, magna cum laude, with a BA in Chemistry and earned her MD and PhD degrees from the University of Connecticut. After residency in internal medicine at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, she moved to the National Institutes of Health, where she completed a clinical fellowship in infectious diseases along with a post-doctoral fellowship in molecular virology in the laboratory of Bernard Moss.

She is board-certified in internal medicine and infectious diseases and has clinical (adjunct) faculty status at Emory University School of Medicine. She is a Fellow of the Infectious Diseases Society of America, the recipient of many awards and honors, and the author or coauthor of many book chapters and more than 125 peer-reviewed publications.