

ER24

INTERNATIONAL

Aeromedical Services

**Hantavirus 2026 & other
communicable diseases**

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From Cruise Ship



How did we get here?

To Quarantine



Why South Africa?



Case Description:

27/04: 70 y/o male patient disembarked off cruise ship with flu-like symptoms at Ascension Island

28/04: Patient deteriorated with ?pneumonia – medevac requested by island medical team

29/04: Medevac conducted from Ascension Island to Johannesburg

Information available at time of medevac:

1. Developed flu-like symptoms over 6 days
2. Disembarked off cruise ship (notable incidence of upper respiratory tract infection among passengers)
3. Presenting with symptoms in keeping with pneumonia
4. Broad panel PCR testing on island (viral panel, Malaria, Dengue) all results negative

Admission arranged in Johannesburg, accepting doctor and treating doctor in direct contact

Port Health approval obtained for patient admission to South Africa based on medical report provided

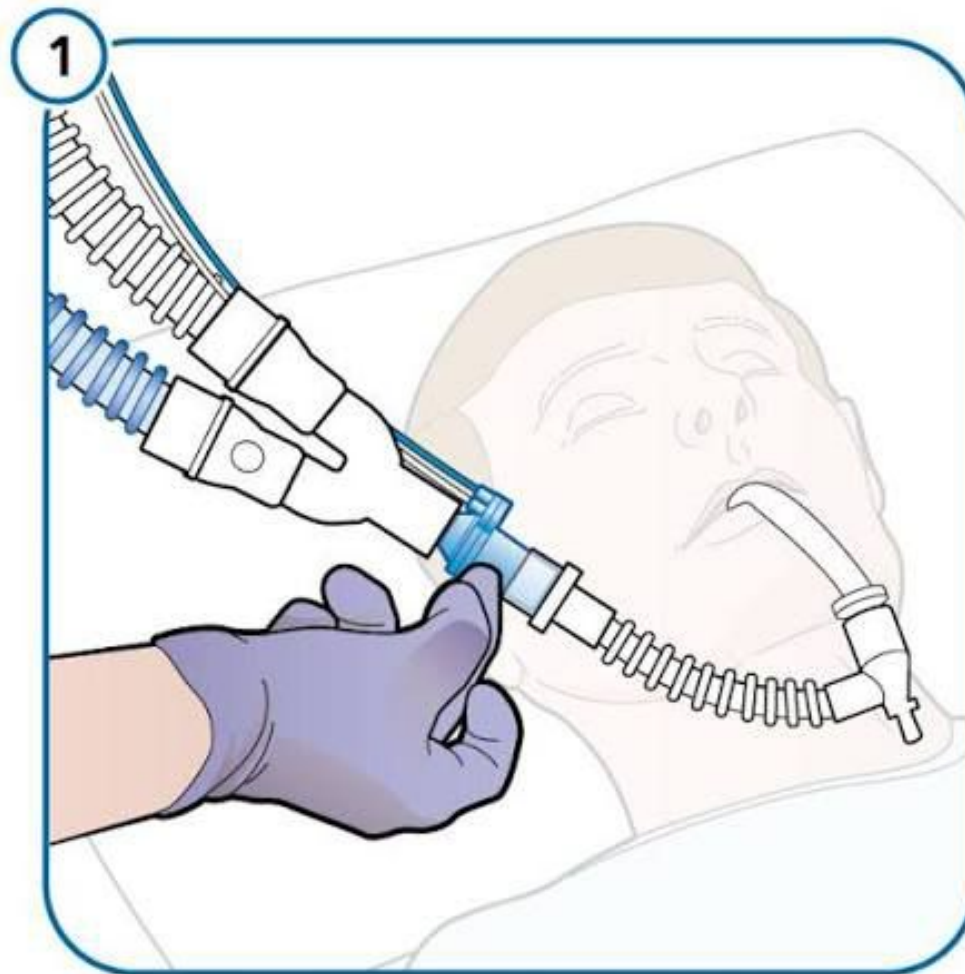
At this point, this appeared like a standard medevac flight

May 2 2026 – picture of multiple patients evident



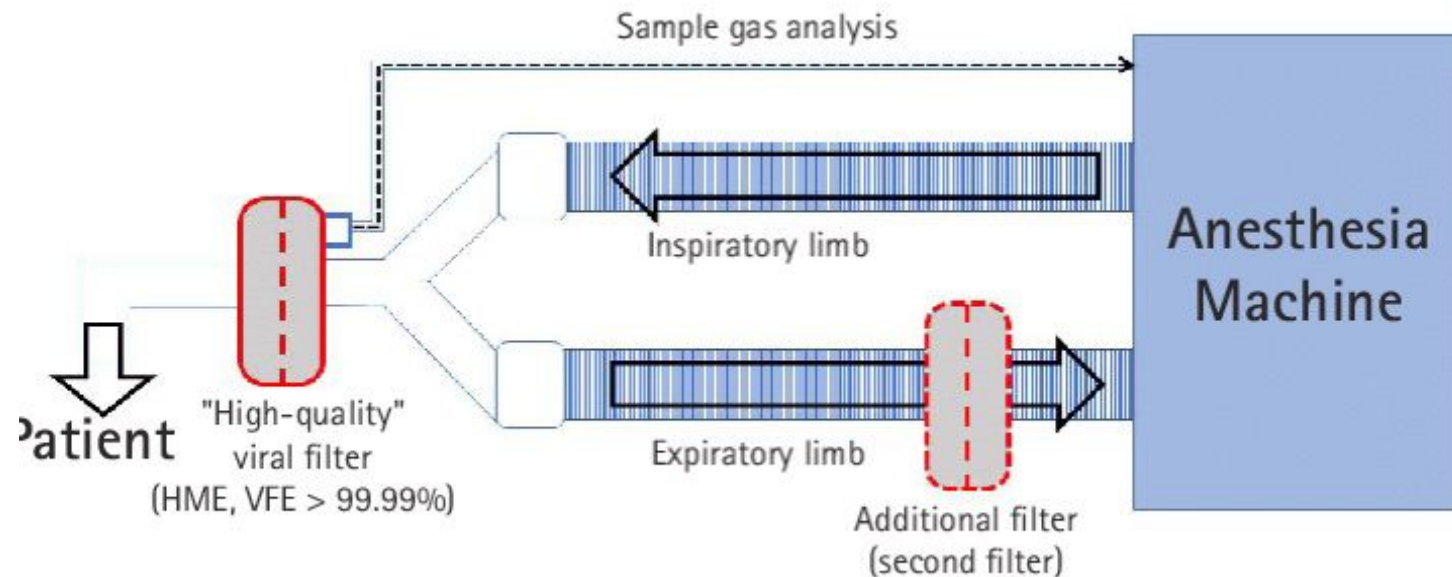
Why are there high-risk medical staff?

- Pneumonia frequently encountered in air ambulance environment
- Standard IPC practices employed



Additional logistical challenges faced

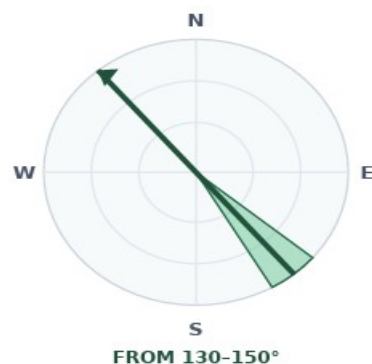
PCO ₂	35.7	mmHg
PO ₂	51	mmHg
HCO ₃	20.9	mmol/L
BE, ec f	-4	mmol/L
sO ₂	85	%
TCO ₂	22	mmol/L
Na	135	mmol/L
K	3.3	mmol/L
iCa	1.13	mmol/L
Glu	11.9	mmol/L
Hct	49	%PCV
Hb*	16.7	g/dL
*via Hct		



Additional logistical challenges faced

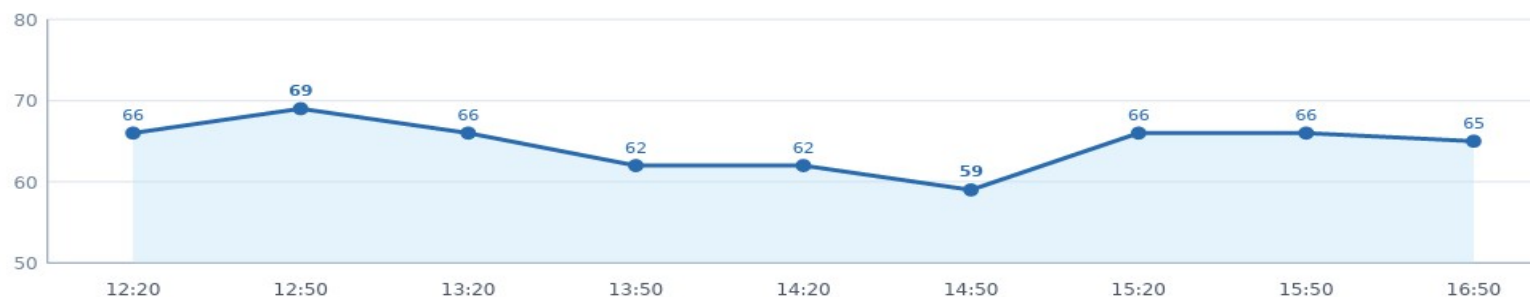
Wind — Direction, Speed & Gusts

Persistent SE'ly trade wind (130°-150°) · Speeds shown in kph (converted from kt × 1.852) · Two gust events during the 13Z hour.



Relative Humidity (%)

Calculated from temperature and dew point via the Magnus formula.



Maintenance of PPE in harsh environment



Travel History NB

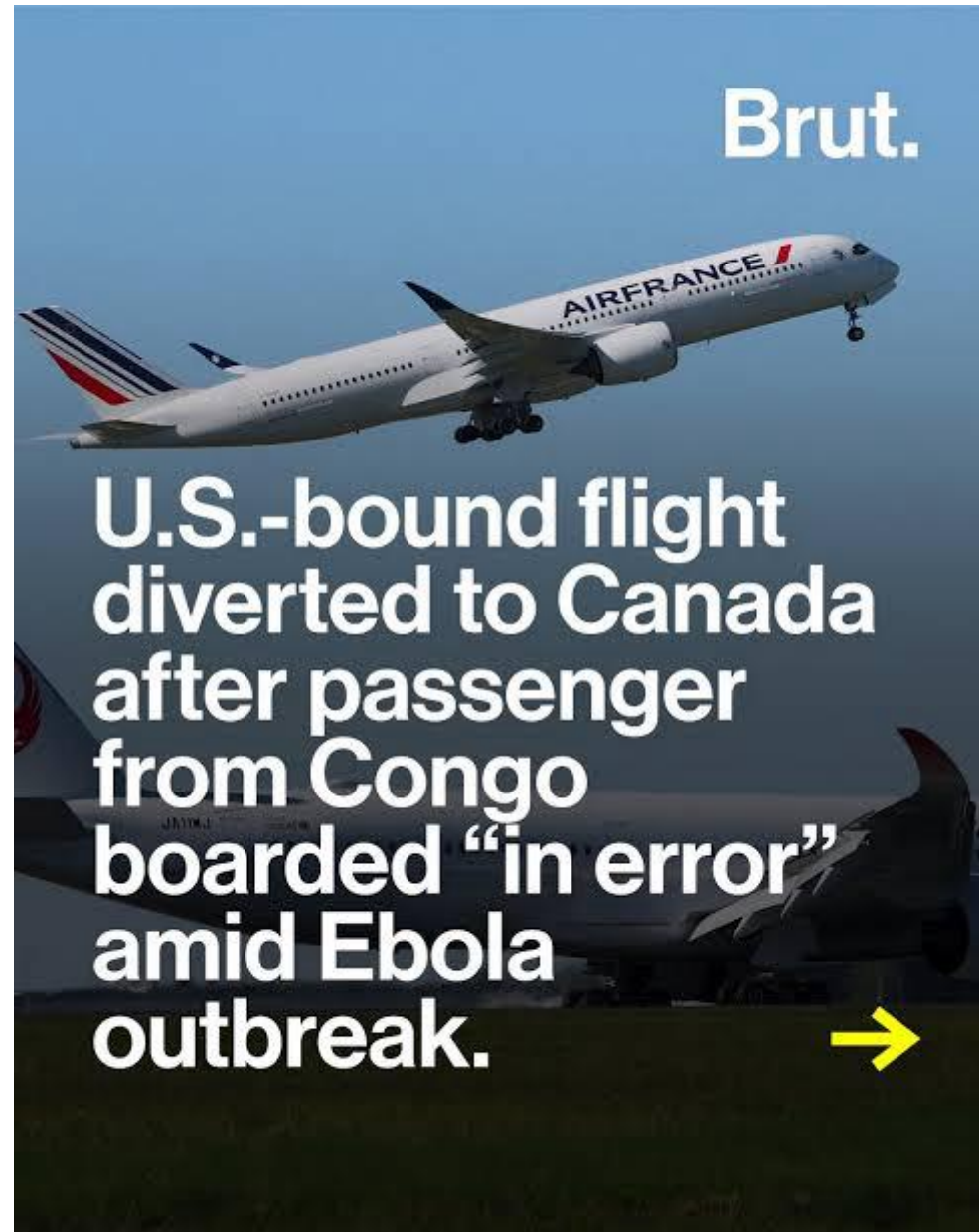
Possibly hard to obtain



Who else is exposed? Is everyone well practiced?



What have we learnt?

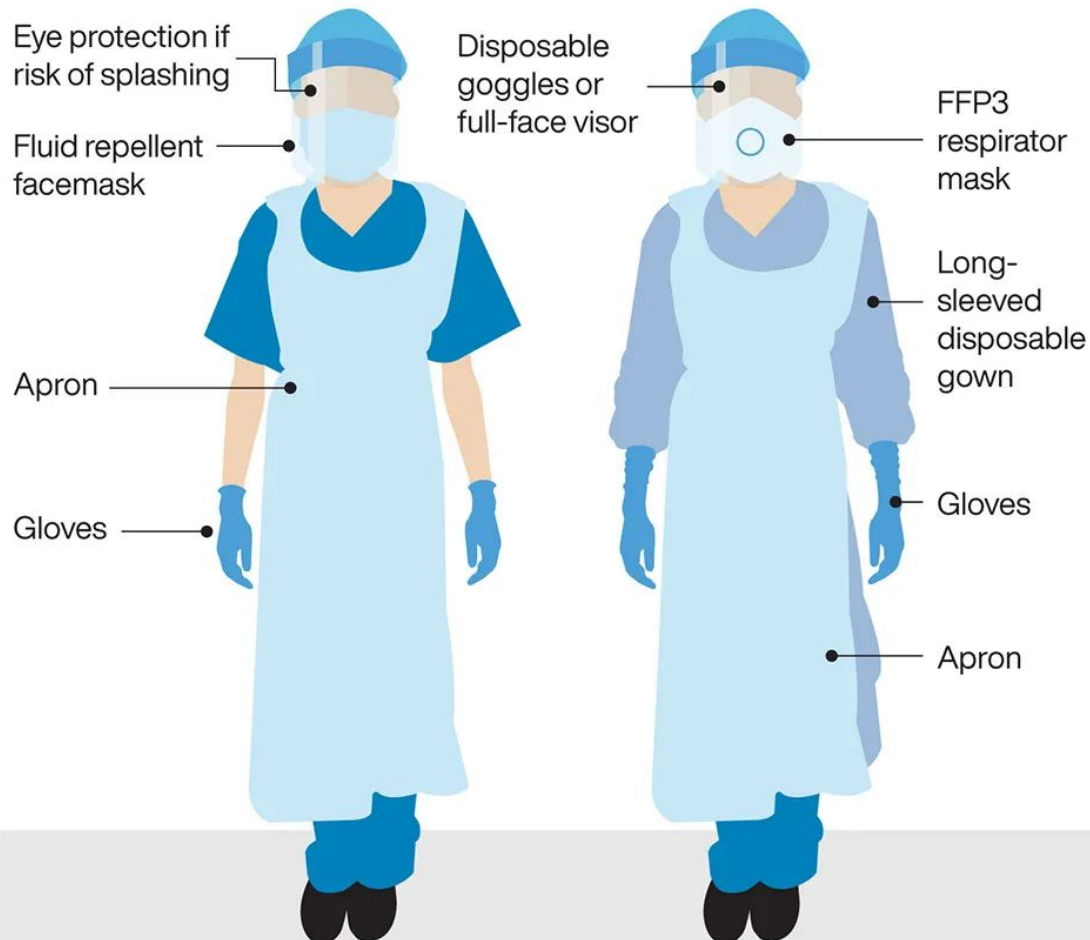


What have we learnt?

Personal protective equipment (PPE) for health workers

Within metre of patient with possible/confirmed Covid-19

For high-risk procedures including contact with bodily fluids



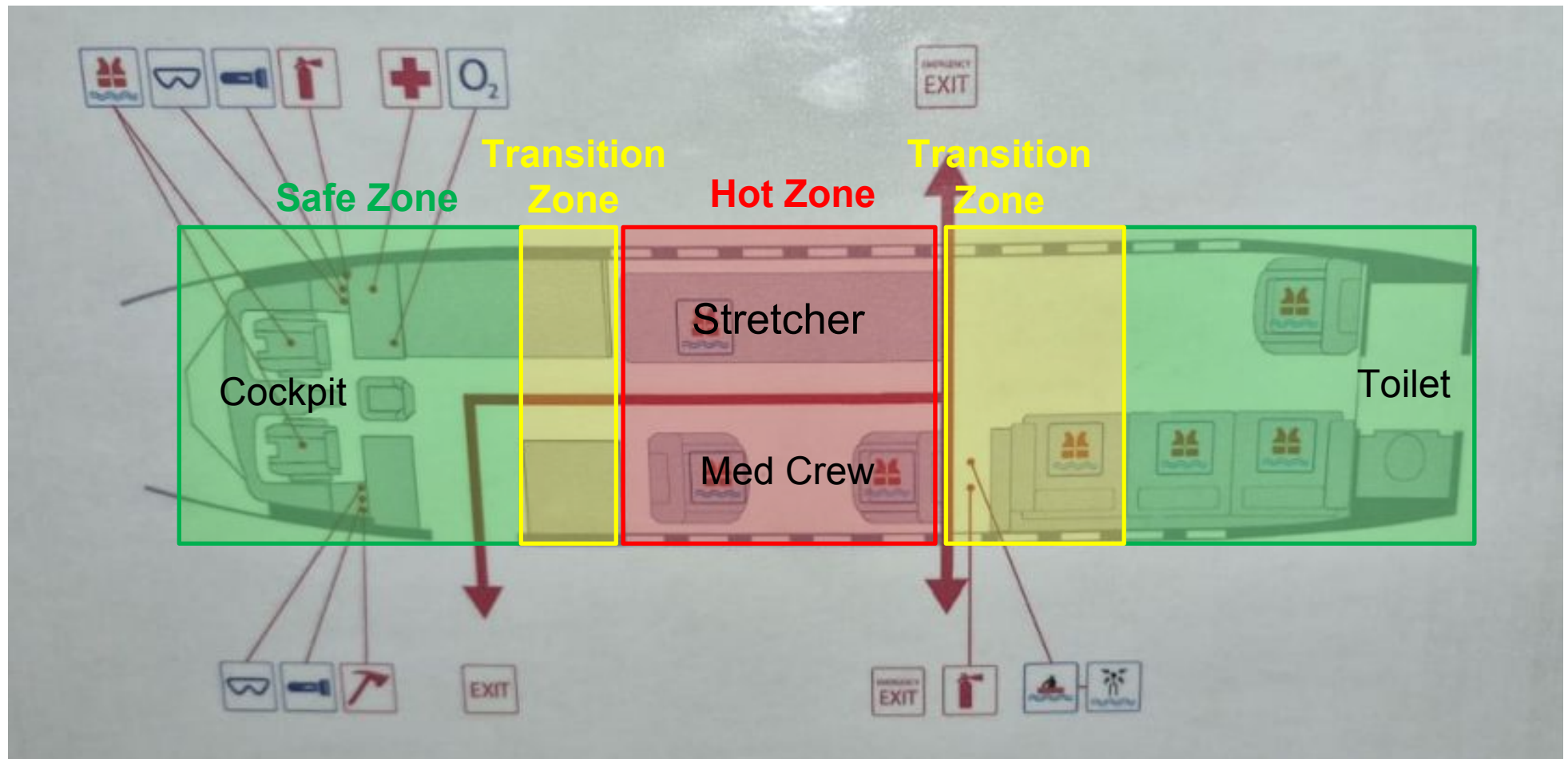
- **SOP review?**
- **PPE design / appropriateness**
- **Regular practice: appropriate to the environment of use**
- **Include all staff involved**

Aspects to consider

- **Mode of transmission – Airborne vs Droplet**
- **Aircraft specific issues**
 - **Size**
 - **Access**
 - **Tech stops**
- **Suitable disinfectants**
- **Surface protection options**
- **Safe zone – cockpit, meals, toilet**



Dassault Falcon 20 Air Ambulance



In closing



Consider every case a possible high risk until laboratory confirmation