

2016 ASPEN award: the winner is a study on the Ebola virus in which FBK participated

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The 2016 Aspen Prize for cooperation and scientific research between Italy and the United States was awarded this year to a study on the Ebola virus in which Fondazione Bruno Kessler of Trento has participated.

The recognition that aims to enhance Italy-US cooperation in the field of scientific research and its applications was awarded yesterday in Rome.

“The one that was awarded,” says researcher Stefano Merler of Fondazione Bruno Kessler, “is the first of four publications we did on Ebola. In two papers published in BMC Medicine, with an expanded team that included researchers from Doctors with Africa CUAMM, We analyzed in detail the Ebola spreading in the Pujehun District in Sierra Leone and Guinea. In another work, which will be released soon in the journal PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases, we propose use strategies for the Ebola vaccine in order to maximize the chances of containment for future outbreaks.”

In the award-winning study, researchers have published the first estimates on the recent Ebola spread in Liberia. Estimates that are crucial to understanding what would be the most effective containment strategies to be put in place. Researchers had estimated that at the beginning of the epidemic about 53% of cases of infection had occurred through family, 38% in health care facilities, and 9% during funeral ceremonies. Results that supported how important is to shorten as much as possible the time between the onset of symptoms and hospitalization, in order to decrease the transmission in the family environment, and to strengthen the introduction of Ebola-specific centers, so as to reduce transmission in hospital facilities that are not adequately prepared for treatment.

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