Throughout its history, ebola has caused humanity to hunker down and hope for the best. It is a three-tool implement of devastation; a contagious, hemorrhagic, deadly virus.

But with over 7,500 doses of the experimental rVSV-ZEBOV Ebola vaccine being deployed in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the battle has turned. Instead of containment, quarantine and waiting it out, science is attacking. The private sector, along with the World Health Organization, regional officials, and NGOs, are all working together. Merck donated the vaccines, while Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance added $1 million in logistical support.

This is a big psychological change from 2015, when 11,000 people died and almost 29,000 were infected in West Africa before it was contained. America went into a media-induced panic [1] after one case hit our shores.

The vaccine is the weapon, the tactic is ring vaccination. A ring vaccination strategy means tracing the contacts and contacts of contacts of a recently confirmed case and vaccinating them, along with support staff in country. For this outbreak, more than 600 have already been identified. Vaccination will be deployed in the northwestern Equator Province where as of Friday there were 46 suspected, probable and confirmed Ebola cases and 26 deaths. The focus will be in the rural town of Bikoro and Mbandaka, the provincial capital with four confirmed cases - but a population of over 1 million people.

This is the biggest test for the vaccine. Nearly 800 in Guinea received it in March 2016 and we don’t hear of that outbreak like we do its precessor. That is a good sign. This may not be perfect [2] but that is no reason to stop progress.

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