Rwanda is taking a big step in understanding the Marburg virus with a new study that will help fight the disease. The research focuses on people who recovered from the recent Marburg outbreak in the country.

By studying their immune systems, scientists hope to learn more about how the body fights the virus, and use this knowledge to develop better treatments, vaccines, and ways to care for patients.

Rwanda’s fast response to the outbreak, which was declared over in December 2024, has been praised worldwide. The virus infected 66 people, most of whom were healthcare workers. Sadly, 15 people died, but many others survived, offering researchers a unique chance to study how the body recovers from this deadly virus.

The new study, which will last two years, is being led by the Rwanda Biomedical Centre (RBC) and is funded by the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI). It will focus on the immune response of people who survived Marburg. By donating blood samples, these survivors will help scientists learn more about the levels of antibodies and other immune markers that might protect against the virus.

The Director General of RBC, Prof. Claude Mambo Muvunyi, said, “This research will help us understand how the body fights Marburg and guide the development of vaccines and treatments.” He added that the country is committed to using science and innovation to improve healthcare and prepare for future outbreaks.

Dr. Richard Hatchett, CEO of CEPI, praised Rwanda’s quick and effective response to the outbreak. “The majority of those infected survived, giving scientists an important opportunity to learn more about the virus and how we can protect others,” he said.

Marburg is a highly dangerous virus closely related to Ebola. It spreads through contact with infected animals, like bats, and through bodily fluids between people. The symptoms can include fever, muscle aches, diarrhea, and vomiting, and it can lead to death.

Thanks to Rwanda’s quick action, the country was able to trace contacts, test people, and even start a clinical trial for a Marburg vaccine. The country’s strong healthcare system is key to this success.

The study will involve up to 300 people, including those who recovered from

Marburg, their close contacts, and people who were not infected. The research results will be shared publicly to help scientists around the world.

This study is an important step in the fight against Marburg, and the contributions of survivors offer hope for a safer future.