

Current major event

Emergency Meeting on Scaling up AWD/Cholera Preparedness and Response in EMR

An emergency sub-Regional meeting was co-hosted, for two days, by WHO and UNICEF in collaboration with the Ministry of Health of Lebanon, in Beirut from 8–9 July 2017, to discuss the ongoing Acute watery diarrhoea (AWD)/cholera outbreak in Somalia, Sudan and Yemen and the risk of spillover to neighboring countries, due to frequent movement of population fleeing countries affected by conflict and other reasons. A total of 51 participants representing six Regional Ministries of Health, WHO, UNICEF, and IFRC–MENA attended the meeting.

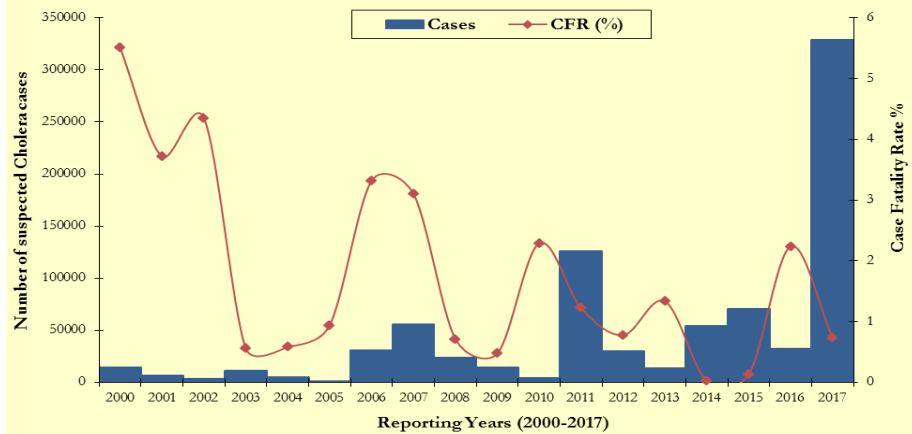
Editorial note

AWD and cholera are the most commonly reported epidemic-prone diseases in the EMR (Please see the graph above), with Somalia, Iraq, Yemen, Sudan, Syria, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Sudan most affected. On-going outbreaks of acute watery diarrhoea and cholera in Somalia, Sudan and Yemen do not show any signs of slowing down, despite concert efforts by health authorities and partners to scale up the response measures.

Since late 2016 and up till now, Somalia and Yemen recorded one of the worst cholera epidemics in recent years. In Yemen, the outbreak has spread to over 75% of the country since it was first announced in October 2016, recording 291,554 suspected cases and 1,678 deaths (CFR= 0.6%) as of 09 July 2017; and despite huge numbers of people affected, it is predicted that the peak of outbreak has not yet been reached. In Somalia, the cholera outbreak has spread to 16 out of 18 regions of the country, recording 69,948 cases since the beginning of 2017 with 1,119 deaths (CFR=1.6%). AWD and cholera outbreaks are also confirmed in the bordering countries of Ethiopia and South Sudan.

In Sudan, cases of AWD have been reported in 15 out of 18 states between August 2016 – 09 July 2017, recording 21,781 suspected cases with 418 deaths (CFR= 1.9) (Please see the table); and an additional 10,000 cases are expected by

Trend of suspected AWD/cholera suspected cases reported in EMR countries, 2000 - July 2017



Number of suspected AWD/cholera cases and deaths in EMR, 2016 - July 2017

Country	Cases	Deaths	CFR (%)
Somalia*	69,948	1,119	1.6
Sudan**	21,781	418	1.9
Yemen***	291,554	1,678	0.6
Total	383,283	3,215	0.8

*Somalia numbers since Epi week 01, 2017

** Sudan numbers since Epi week 33, 2016

*** Yemen numbers since Epi week 39, 2016

the end of 2017 if the outbreak is not contained quickly.

The occurrence and severity of cholera outbreaks regionally are greatly aggravated by the deteriorating water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) conditions, compounded by food insecurity, malnutrition, poor living conditions, insecurity, inaccessibility and increased population movements. In both areas of health and WASH, stronger leadership and coordination (including joint planning and action) and timely data management to inform targeted action are required.

The increasing numbers of AWD/ cholera cases across the region and the ability of health partners to respond will require a scaling up of a number of urgent interventions, primarily at district and household level. The most critical interventions include ensuring adequate sanitation and safe drinking water, and promoting hygiene practices and behavior change in communities and among health care workers. Vaccines should be used only to supplement preventive measures.

Update on outbreaks

in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

MERS-CoV in Saudi Arabia; Cholera in Somalia; Cholera in Yemen; Chikungunya in Pakistan; Wild poliovirus in Pakistan.

Current public health events of international concern

[cumulative N° of cases (deaths), CFR %]

Avian Influenza: 2006-2017

Egypt (A/H5N1) [359 (122), 34%]
Egypt (A/H9N2) [3 (0)]

Chikungunya: 2016-2017

Pakistan [6,618 (0)]

MERS-CoV: 2012-2017

Saudi Arabia [1,671 (656), 39.3%]

Cholera: 2016-2017

Somalia [69,948 (1,119), 1.6%]
Yemen [291,554 (1,678), 0.6%]

Meningococcal disease: 2017

Nigeria [14,513 (1,166), 8%]

Avian Influenza A (H7N9): 2013-2017

China [1,533 (592), 38.6%]

Ebola Virus Disease: 2017

DRC [8 (4), 50%]

Wild poliovirus: 2014-2017

Pakistan [383 (0)]
Afghanistan [65 (0)]

Zika Virus Infection: 2015-2017

84 countries and territories have reported transmission so far.