

## Current major event

### First Conference on Acute Respiratory Infections in EMR

The World Health Organization, in partnership with Global Health Development (GHD), is launching the first Scientific Conference on Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI) in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. The conference will be held in Amman, Jordan, from 11 to 14 December 2017, in conjunction with the Fourth Meeting of the Eastern Mediterranean Acute Respiratory Infection Surveillance (EMARIS) Network.

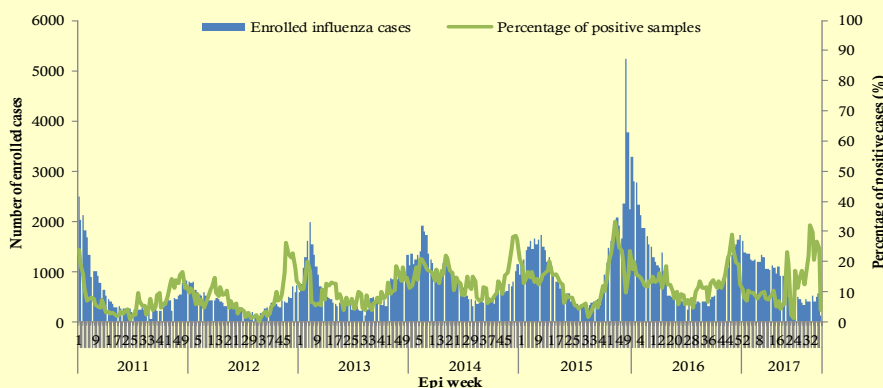
### Editorial note

The theme of the first scientific conference on acute respiratory infection in the Eastern Mediterranean Region is “*Better understanding, Better Preparedness and Better Response*”. This conference is first in its kind and it is expected that young scientists, researchers and public health professionals would present new and up-to-date scientific research findings on the burden, threats and risk factors for the epidemic and pandemic –prone acute respiratory infections in the Eastern Mediterranean Region.

During last five years, three meetings of the EMARIS Network were conducted to document progress and share best practices for improved surveillance, detection and response system for influenza and other epidemic-prone respiratory viruses in the Region. During the fourth meeting of the same series, it is expected that evidence on the burden, patterns, transmission and circulation of seasonal and zoonotic influenza as well as other emerging respiratory viruses will be presented during the conference. This evidence will then be used to develop appropriate strategies and control measures for prevention and mitigation.

The efforts of the World Health Organization Regional Office for Eastern Mediterranean Region in improving surveillance for influenza and respiratory infections have been notably impressive. Since 2006 to date, at least 16 of the 22 countries in the Region have established functional surveillance system for Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI) and Influenza-like Illness (ILI). There are, currently 16 National Influenza Centres (NICs) in the Region and there has been a significant improvement in the number

### Number of enrolled cases for Influenza and other circulating virus type in EMR, 2011-2017



### NUMBER OF SARI CASES POSITIVE FOR INFLUENZA AND OTHER CIRCULATING VIRUS TYPE IN EMR, 2011-2017

Years	Cases enrolled	Positive results
2011	30,668	3,131
2012	20,238	1,924
2013	33,366	3,668
2014	44,563	7,124
2015	62,384	10,121
2016	53,173	7,949
2017	31,968	3,382
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>276,360</b>	<b>37,299</b>

of influenza cases recognized through the SARI surveillance system and detection through diagnosis at the NIC (*Please see above and the table*).

All 22 countries in the Region have established a trained rapid response teams at the national level and amongst these countries, 15 countries have trained RRTs at sub-national levels. More and more influenza specimens are now shared with the WHO Collaborating Centers for vaccine strain selection. This progress, which has been done in partnerships with the United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention (US-CDC), has brought significant improvement in the areas of detection, assessment, notification and response to outbreaks of influenza and other emerging respiratory infections currently circulating the Region such as the MERS.

It is expected that the first scientific conference of ARI in the Region will provide a further impetus on sustainable capacities in the countries for prevention and control of emerging respiratory infections.

## Update on outbreaks

*in the Eastern Mediterranean Region*

**MERS** in Saudi Arabia; **cholera** in Somalia; **cholera** in Yemen; **dengue** 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)]

#### Avian influenza A (H7N9): 2013-2017

China [1,564 (612), 39.1%]

#### Chikungunya: 2016-2017

Pakistan [7,977 (0)]

#### Cholera: 2016-2017

Somalia [77,783 (1,159), 1.5%]

Yemen [834,064 (2,165), 0.3%]

#### Plague: 2017

Madagascar [684 (57), 8.3%]

#### Dengue fever: 2017

Pakistan [74,820 (54), 0.1%]

#### MERS: 2012-2017

Saudi Arabia [1,726 (673), 39%]

#### Wild poliovirus: 2014-2017

Pakistan [5 (0)]

Afghanistan [6 (0)]

#### Zika virus infection: 2015-2017

84 countries and territories have reported transmission so far.