

## Current major events

### Meningococcal disease in Sudan: No outbreak so far

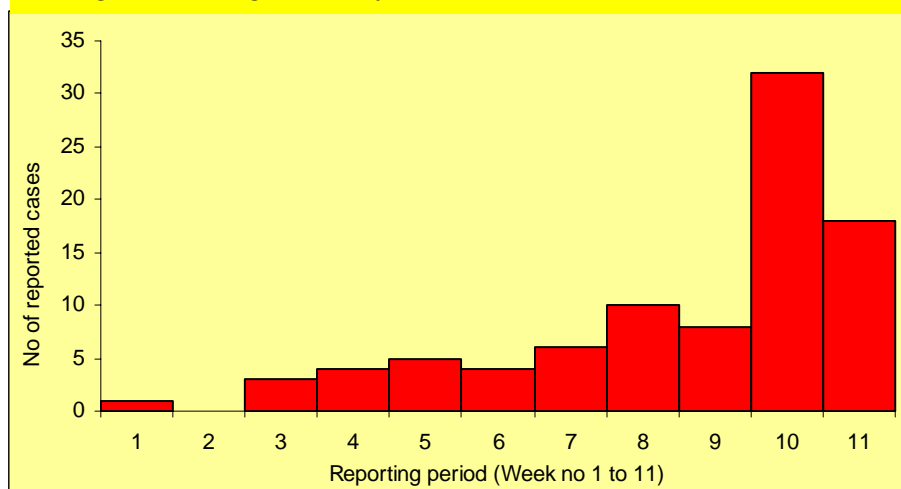
During the first 11 weeks of 2010 (01 January to 16 March 2010), a total of 91 suspected cases of meningococcal meningitis including 4 deaths (CFR: 4.3%) were reported from the northern part of Sudan. Majority of cases have occurred in Greater Darfur (40 out of 91 suspected cases) and are characterized by far the predominance of *Neisseria meningitidis* (Nm) serogroup A. None of the districts in the affected states have, however, not crossed the alert or epidemic threshold so far.

### Editorial note

Meningococcal meningitis is a yearly occurrence in sub-Saharan Africa, in an area known as “*African Meningitis Belt*”. The area stretches from Senegal in the west to Ethiopia in the east, an area with a population of nearly 300 million people. This year, low levels of meningitis activities have, so far, been observed in Sudan with no outbreak reported from any epidemic foci within Northern Sudan. Like all other countries in the Belt, the epidemic meningitis season in Sudan stretches between January to June every year until the dry season is over. There are many environmental factors like dust storms, delayed onset of rainy season as well as population movement which can, all, prolong the epidemic meningitis season and precipitate major outbreaks during the high risk seasons for meningitis.

Although there are sporadic occurrences of cases from ten out of fifteen states in Northern Sudan and the current case-load is lower than those reported during the same corresponding period in 2009 (91 cases vs. 348 cases), the outbreak has not yet been confirmed in any of the affected state of Northern Sudan as per the thresholds used to detect meningitis outbreak in countries of the African Meningitis Belt. Considering the long season for meningitis and other factors that might precipitate the occurrence of an meningitis outbreak like the (i) existing immunity of the susceptible populations, (ii) effectiveness of past vaccination

Meningococcal meningitis cases reported from Northern Sudan, 01 Jan-16 March 2010



Suspected cases of meningitis reported from Sudan in last 11 years

Year	Cases	Deaths	CFR
1999	33,664	2508	7.5
2000	5,076	468	9.2
2001	2,252	336	14.9
2002	2,407	455	18.9
2003	1,436	158	11.0
2004	1,133	175	15.4
2005	3,703	124	3.3
2006	2,617	91	3.4
2007	2,297	115	5.0
2008	294	12	4.0
2009	1476	53	3.5

tion programmes (vaccine efficacy) and population coverage of mass vaccination programme recorded in the last major outbreak reported in the state; (iii) population movement and (iv) other climatic factors like the dust storms and others, it is too early to predict, epidemiologically, whether there would or would not be any major outbreak from meningococcal meningitis this year. Epidemiological data from the previous years have shown that the peak of the outbreak in Sudan, specially when the country had faced major meningitis outbreak, is usually between week no 17 and week no 20.

Since all the neighbouring countries of Sudan are reporting meningitis cases, it is likely that the country may face small multi-focal outbreaks in the coming months and the challenge would be to contain these small multi-focal outbreaks at its epi-centre through appropriate public health interventions. If the transmission of meningitis could be stopped immediately after such small multi-focal outbreaks are detected any big epidemic from meningitis can be averted.

## Update on outbreaks

in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

Avian Influenza A(H5N1) in Egypt;  
Dengue fever in Sudan

### Current public health events of international concern

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

#### Avian influenza

Egypt	[106 (32), 30.1%]
Vietnam	[116 (58), 50 %]
Global total	[489(289), 59.1%]

#### Meningococcal meningitis

Chad	[167 (17), 10.1%]
Nigeria	[257 (32), 12.4%]
Uganda	[74 (4), 5.4%]
Burkina Faso	[2520 (378), 15.%]

#### Dengue fever

Sudan	[1268 (8), 0.6%]
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#### Pandemic (H1N1) 2009

AFRO	No of deaths: 167
AMRO	No of deaths: At least 7622
EMRO	No of deaths: 1019
EURO	No of deaths: At least 4596
SEARO	No of deaths: 1691
WPRO	No of deaths: 1718
<b>GLOBAL Total</b>	No of deaths: 16,813

CFR=Case-Fatality Rate