

## Current major events

### Travel-associated cases of Legionnaires' disease on the rise

In 2009, the European Working Group for Legionella Infection Network (EWGLINET) reported 26 laboratory-confirmed cases of legionnaire's disease amongst European citizens that have been associated with travel history to a number of countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. During the first quarter of 2010, a cluster of two (2) more cases of legionnaire's disease were reported to EMRO by the EWGLINET.

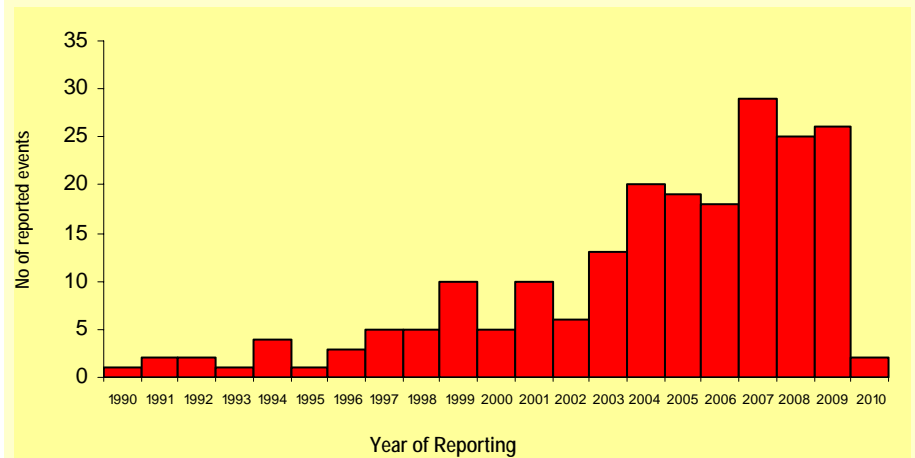
### Editorial note

Countries in Europe, routinely report cases of legionnaires's disease to EWGLINET. These reports are shared with WHO if they are travel related and WHO in turn notifies the affected countries. Since 1990, EWGLINET has recorded a total of 207 laboratory-confirmed cases of legionnaires' disease whose illnesses were associated with travel to 9 countries in the EMR. These cases have been reported in association with stay in hotels in some of the popular holiday destinations and resorts in Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and the UAE.

The number of cases of legionnaires's disease with travel history to countries of EMR have significantly increased in recent times. This clearly shows that the risk due to legionnaires' disease remains a persistent public health threat in these countries. There are no information on the extent to which the affected countries use the reports received to initiate investigations and what appropriate preventive and control measures being undertaken. Some hotels in the same countries have been associated with repeated cluster of cases over many years.

Legionellosis is an infectious disease caused by an aquatic bacterium belonging to the genus *Legionella pneumophilla*. It thrives in temperatures between 25°C and 45°C and transmitted through inhalation of aerosol. The disease acquired its

Reported Legionnaires' disease with Travel History to EMR Countries



### Outbreaks of legionnaires disease

Year	Country	Cases	Deaths
1976	Philadelphia, USA	221	34
1985	United Kingdom	175	28
1999	Netherlands	200	32
2001	Spain	800	6
2002	United Kingdom	172	7

name in July 1976 following an outbreak of pneumonia among delegates attending a convention of American Legion in Philadelphia.

Travel-associated legionnaires' disease, both sporadic and epidemic, has been reported from many countries across all continents. There is likely to be considerable under-detection and perhaps under-reporting of the disease, so that the true extent of travel-associated legionellosis is unclear. Most of the travel-associated cases occur due to contaminated water systems in hotels. The publicity surrounding cluster of these reported cases can be harmful to tourism with adverse effects on local economies.

As part of the international health regulation (IHR 2005) requirements, effective surveillance for legionella infection is essential to identify and control the point source of infection. The source countries need to take this issue heads on, investigate all reported cases and implement control measures as needed. It is in the best interest of these countries that they make use of these information to control legionellosis.

### 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	[109 (34), <b>31.1%</b> ]
Vietnam	[117 (59), <b>50.4%</b> ]
Global total	[493(292), <b>59.2%</b> ]

#### Meningococcal meningitis

Chad	[1531(151), <b>9.81%</b> ]
Burkina Faso	[2520 (378), <b>15%</b> ]

#### Dengue fever

Sudan	[1599 (12), <b>0.7%</b> ]
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#### Rift Valley Fever

South Africa	[ 63 (2), <b>3.17%</b> ]
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#### Pandemic (H1N1) 2009

AFRO	No of deaths: 167
AMRO	No of deaths: At least 8217
EMRO	No of deaths: 1019
EURO	No of deaths: At least 4763
SEARO	No of deaths: 1733
WPRO	No of deaths: 1801
<b>GLOBAL Total</b>	No of deaths: 17,700

CFR=Case-Fatality Rate