

Current major events

Emergence of *Neisseria meningitidis* W135 in Sudan

The Federal Ministry of Health, Sudan has reported 55 suspected cases of meningococcal meningitis including 5 related deaths (CFR: 9%) from South Kordofan State between 31 January to 3 April 2010.

The predominant causative strain was identified to be *Neisseria meningitidis* W135. So far, 5 laboratory samples (CSF) have been tested positive for NMW135 at the National Public Health Laboratory

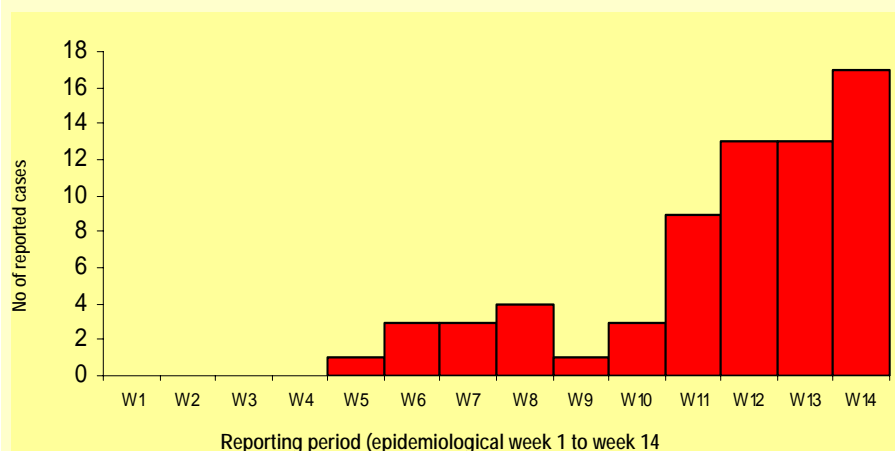
Editorial note

A total of 55 cases of meningococcal meningitis including 5 related deaths were reported by the Federal Ministry of Health, Sudan in the first quarter of 2010. Five samples tested positive for *Neisseria meningitidis* W135 (NMW135) at the National Public Health Laboratory in Khartoum. NMW135 strain was first identified in Sudan's Darfur region in 2004. The introduction of this strain has altered the meningitis vaccine considerations and requirements for Sudan during outbreaks.

Since 2005, Sudan has joined 13 other countries in the African Meningitis belt in implementing the enhanced surveillance for meningococcal meningitis in the country. Sudan is the only country in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region that lies within the African Meningitis belt. From 2002, WHO, with the support of the Meningitis Vaccine Project (MVP) and the WHO Collaborating Centers, have been reinforcing surveillance activities in 14 countries in Africa. This enhanced epidemic meningitis surveillance is accomplished through the application of standard operating procedures (SOPs), a set of guidelines developed for health personnel from peripheral to state levels, within the context and in line of the integrated disease surveillance and response (IDSR) strategy.

It is worth noting that the early detection of meningitis outbreaks and early identification of the causal pathogens remains

Suspected meningococcal meningitis cases reported from South Kordofan, Sudan



History of epidemic meningitis in Sudan

Year	Cases	Deaths	CFR
1999	33664	2508	7.5%
2000	5076	468	9.2%
2001	2252	336	14.9%
2002	2407	455	18.9%
2003	1436	158	11%
2004	1133	175	15.4%
2005	3703	124	3.46%
2006	6487	475	7.3%
2007	14600	727	5%

the key to a rapid implementation of control measures. Sudan, like the rest of the countries in the meningitis belt witnesses recurrent outbreaks of meningococcal meningitis (every 8 to 12 years). The last major outbreak of meningitis in Sudan was in 1999/2000. There was multi-focal meningitis outbreaks in 2007 resulting in over 14000 cases and 727 deaths (mainly in the South).

The meningitis season in the Sudan begins around November and ends with the beginning of the rains in April/May (South) and July/August in the North. The current finding does not represent an outbreak. However there should be no complacency on the part of the health authorities in Sudan. It is still early in the meningitis season. The enhanced surveillance needs to be continued, even with more vigor following the reappearance of NMW135. Sudan has put a request to the International Coordinating Group (IVG) for Meningitis Vaccine and other provisions. It is hoped that the ICG will respond to this positively, so that the Country may have some emergency stocks for the season.

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), 31.1%]
Vietnam	[117 (59), 50.4 %]
Global total	[493(292), 59.2%]

Meningococcal meningitis

Chad	[1531(151), 9.81%]
Burkina Faso	[2520 (378), 15. %]

Dengue fever

Sudan	[1599 (12), 0.7%]
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Rift Valley Fever

South Africa	[63 (2), 3.17%]
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Pandemic (H1N1) 2009

AFRO	No of deaths: 168
AMRO	No of deaths: At least 8274
EMRO	No of deaths: 1019
EURO	No of deaths: At least 4776
SEARO	No of deaths: 1757
WPRO	No of deaths: 1804
GLOBAL Total	No of deaths: 17,798

CFR=Case-Fatality Rate