

## Current major events

### Rift Valley Fever in Saudi Arabia

A 40 year old Saudi man, a fire fighter by profession and resident in Najran, was diagnosed with Rift Valley fever on 28 April 2010. On 23 April, he presented with clinical signs of haemorrhagic fever to a health facility in Najran run by the Ministry of Health. He was hospitalized on the same day and his blood sample was sent to the Central Public Health Laboratory (Riyadh) and tested for various viral haemorrhagic fevers. The sample tested positive for Rift Valley Fever (RVF) on real time RT-PCR. Serological tests for Rift Valley fever virus IgM and IgG were negative. The patient recovered from his illness and was discharged from the hospital on 30 April 2010.

### Editorial note

Last week, the IHR national focal point of Saudi Arabia notified the World Health Organization of one human case of laboratory confirmed Rift Valley Fever. This is the first human case of RVF reported from the Kingdom since 2001. The case was a man from Najran area and he had a recent history of travel to Gizan Province (see map). These two areas are located at the border of Saudi Arabia with Yemen.

Rift Valley Fever is a viral zoonosis that may cause severe disease in both animals and humans leading to high morbidity and mortality. The disease was first identified in Kenya's Rift Valley in 1930.

It will be recalled that in 2000 both Saudi Arabia and Yemen experienced a major outbreak of Rift Valley fever involving humans and animals. This was the first outbreak of RVF recorded outside the African Continent. The first cases of suspected viral haemorrhagic fever were reported in the Gizan Province on 10 and 11 September 2000. Laboratory analysis at the United States' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, confirmed a diagnosis of RVF in samples from Saudi



### RVF Transmission in Humans

- Direct or indirect contact with blood of infected animal
- Bites of infected Aedes mosquitoes
- Some evidence of infection through ingestions of un-pasteurized or un-cooked milk from infected animals
- No human to human transmission documented

Arabia. The World Health Organization (WHO) and its partners responded to that outbreak of Rift Valley Fever (RVF) in Saudi Arabia (Jizan Province) and Yemen, (Wadi Mawr, Al-Hudaydah Governorate). High-level agreement between Saudi Arabia and Yemen enabled joint investigation and ensured effective coordination of the international response to control the disease on both sides of the border.

At this stage, it seems that the reported human case of RVF in Najran is an isolated case. All other suspected cases have so far tested negative. However, there are evidence that RVF infection has been detected on and off from livestock in Gizan for some time now. This has the ominous warning that the virus is circulating in animals in the area. If this situation is not closely monitored and preventive measures put into place with immediate effect, there is a strong possibility that spread of the virus in the area and across the border into Yemen may escalate.

## Update on outbreaks

**Rift Valley Fever in Saudi Arabia ; Suspected viral haemorrhagic fever (VHF) in Iraq; Dengue in Sudan**

### Current public health events of international concern

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

#### Avian influenza

Egypt	[109 (34), 31.1%]
Indonesia	[165 (136), 82.4 %]
Cambodia	[10 (8), 80%]
Global total	[498(294), 59%]

#### Dengue fever

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

Saudi Arabia	[ 1 (0), 0%]
South Africa	[ 172 (15), 8.7%]

#### Pandemic (H1N1) 2009

AFRO	No of deaths: 168
AMRO	No of deaths: At least 8357
EMRO	No of deaths: 1019
EURO	No of deaths: At least 4860
SEARO	No of deaths: 1787
WPRO	No of deaths: 1810
<b>GLOBAL Total</b>	<b>No of deaths: 18,001</b>

CFR=Case-Fatality Rate