

## Current major event

### Cholera continues to claim lives but cases decline in 2010

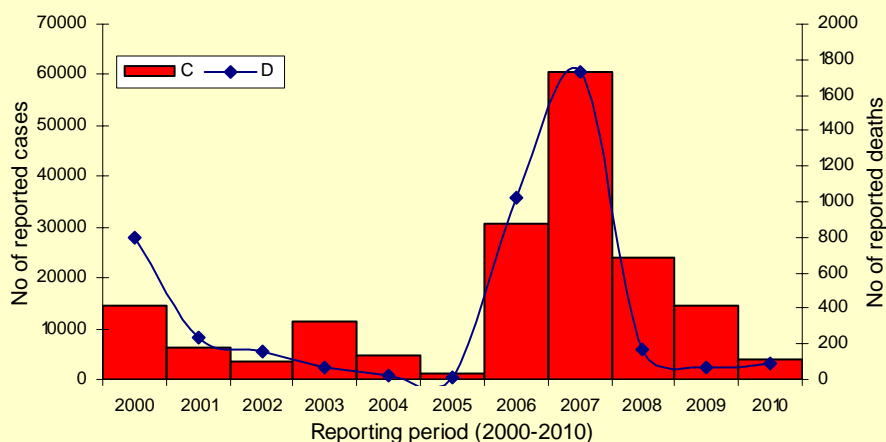
In 2010, cholera was detected and laboratory-confirmed in four countries (Afghanistan, Djibouti, Pakistan and Yemen) of the Eastern Mediterranean Region. 3,983 suspected cases including 92 deaths (CFR=2.3%) were reported from cholera in 2010 from the Region. Although, number of cases declined in 2010 compared to the previous years (*Please see the graph*), cholera is still claiming lives despite the fact that many of these deaths are preventable by simply re-hydrating the patients at an early stage with simple and inexpensive yet highly effective life saving treatment.

### Editorial note

Cholera remains a major public health problem in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR). During the last decade (2000-2010), 12 Member States in the Region officially reported 175,501 cases of cholera including 4320 deaths to WHO. Countries in complex emergencies are facing recurrent outbreaks from cholera and other epidemic prone diarrhoeal diseases. Cholera has either re-emerged or re-introduced in these countries as a result of population movement, compromised hygiene and living conditions of displaced people and depleted access of sheltered people to safe water and adequate sanitation. Disruption of primary health care services and failing health systems owing to protracted conflict in these countries in crisis have resulted in explosive outbreaks in some of these countries. In recent time, Afghanistan (2008, 2009 and 2010), Djibouti (2006, 2007 and 2010), Iraq (2007 and 2008), Somalia (2007, 2008 and 2009), Sudan including southern Sudan (2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009) and Yemen (2009, 2010) faced outbreaks from cholera.

Although access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation systems are essential to prevent cholera, these solutions can not be achieved or seen overnight. In the absence of rapid improvement for environmental conditions in the foreseeable future, the pressing challenge, therefore, is to improve the surveillance

**Reported cholera cases and deaths in the EMR by year, 2000-2010**



**Countries with highest number of cases and deaths reported from cholera between 2000-2010\***

Country	Cases	Deaths	CFR (%)
Afghanistan	15588	357	2.2
Djibouti	4370	87	1.9
Iran	1982	20	1
Iraq	7099	39	0.5
Somalia	70734	2129	3
Sudan	75315	1681	2.2

\* As has been reported officially to WHO by the respective countries

capacity of the Member States, particularly those facing recurrent outbreaks so as to early detect, respond and limit the spread of cholera outbreaks effectively, efficiently and timely. In addition, the local community should be mobilized for safe behavioural practice, and point-of-use water purification that can limit the transmission of cholera once an outbreak has been confirmed. A strong social mobilization campaign also need to be launched in the affected areas to ensure that patients with symptoms are referred to the health facilities to receive appropriate treatment early.

Appropriate case management for cholera in all public health facilities remains another critical challenge that the countries should ensure in order to prevent avoidable deaths from cholera. The current response to cholera needs to be changed from being reactive to pre-emptive if changes are desired to halt the continuing rage of cholera in the Region.

## Update on outbreaks

*in the Eastern Mediterranean Region*

A(H5N1) in Egypt; CCHF and Dengue fever in Pakistan; Dengue fever in Yemen; and Kala-azar in southern Sudan

### Current public health events of international concern

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

#### Avian influenza

Egypt	[115 (39), 33.9%]
Indonesia	[171 (141), 82.4 %]
Viet Nam	[119(59), 49.6%
China	[40(26), 65%]
Global total	[512(305), 59.5%]

#### Crimean-congo haemorrhagic fever

Pakistan	[45(3), 6.6%]
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#### Cholera

Haiti	[121518*(2591), 2.1%]
Chad	[2508 (111), 4.4%]
Nigeria	[ 29115(1191),4%]

#### Kala-Azar (Visceral Leishmaniasis)

S. Sudan	[6363( 303). 4.7%]
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#### Dengue fever

Pakistan	[11024(40), 0.3 %]#
Yemen	[1903(12), 0.6 %]#

#### Polio

Congo	[184(85), 46.1 %]
Pakistan	[133(0)]

CFR=Case-Fatality Rate; \* Number of hospital visits; # Laboratory-confirmed cases only