

## Current major event

### Consultation on Estimation of Burden of Influenza in EMRO

The Communicable Disease Surveillance, Forecasting and Response (CSR) unit in the Office for the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) of WHO organized a consultation meeting on the tools for estimating the burden of Influenza and other Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI) in Cairo during the period 15-17 May 2012. In this consultation, experts from GIP in WHO HQ, University of Edinburgh, Royal College London in UK, Field Epidemiology Training Program in Pakistan and WHO Temporary Advisers participated and discussed application of WHO manuals and guidelines in the EMR.

### Editorial note

Influenza infections cause substantial morbidity and mortality every year. WHO estimates that seasonal influenza alone is responsible for three to five million cases of severe illness and between 250 000 and 500 000 deaths each year, resulting in high levels of school and worker absenteeism and huge amounts of productivity loss. Majority of the morbidity can be prevented and the severe outcomes of the disease can be lessened by immunization against the disease.

In order to reduce the disease burden of seasonal influenza infection, WHO encourages its Member States to increase their seasonal vaccine use. The WHO Global Influenza Vaccine Survey in 2010 showed that only 33% (7 out of 22) of the Member States in the EMR had National Seasonal Influenza Immunization Policies in place. It also showed that only 11% of the EMR countries recommend seasonal influenza vaccination in children and 22% in adults. This situation has many reasons: inexistence of a comprehensive influenza program, shortage of vaccine in the Region, weak surveillance systems and unknown burden of influenza and other ARI among the countries are among many. One of the strategies for reducing the global shortage of influenza vaccines for seasonal epidemics and pandemic influen-



### Objectives of the Consultation

- Developing a Regional tool for estimating the burden of seasonal Influenza by the Member States
- Decide on the roadmap for piloting and finalizing the Influenza Burden

za in all countries of the world is increasing the use of seasonal influenza vaccine. As the first step and complementary to the current risk-based approach to vaccination, there is a great need for national immunization policies for seasonal influenza to make increased demand for the vaccine a priority, together with resource mobilization at the regional and national levels to secure sustained introduction. The cornerstone for developing and implementing those policies is a thorough understanding of the burden of influenza in the EMR Member States.

During the three days consultation, the experts discussed the WHO Manual for Estimating the Medical Burden Associated with Seasonal Influenza in a Population and developed a Plan of Action for implementation of the manual in the countries of the EMR. The consultation emphasized on employment of the WHO Global Interim Epidemiological Surveillance Standards for Influenza in complementarity, as a robust surveillance is fundamental for generating valid data.

### Update on outbreaks

*in the Eastern Mediterranean Region*

Hospital associated infection in Jordan; Meningococcal meningitis in Sudan; Avian Influenza (H5N1) in Egypt

### Current public health events of international concern

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

#### Avian influenza

China	[42(28), 66.7%]
Egypt	[167 (60), 35.9%]
Indonesia	[189 (157), 83 %]
Viet Nam	[123(61), 49.5%]
Cambodia	[20(18), 90%]
Bangladesh	[ 6(0), 0% ]
Global total	[603(356), 59.0%]

#### Measles

Afghanistan	[261 (0), 0% ]#
Somalia	[1046 (na), na%)]#
Yemen	[3800(124), 3.3%] #

#### Hospital Associated infection

Jordan	[11(1), 9.1%]#
--------	----------------

#### Meningococcal Meningitis

Chad	[1043(67), 6.4%]
Sudan	[42(7), 16.6%]

CFR=Case-Fatality Rate;  
# Suspected cases only