

Current major event

Meningococcal disease in South Sudan

An outbreak of meningococcal meningitis has been reported from Malakal County in Upper Nile state of South Sudan. As of 17 May 2013, a total of 132 suspected cases including 5 deaths (CFR: 3.7%) have been reported from this locality in Upper Nile State (*Please see the chart*). Most of the reported cases were between the age of 4 and 40 years old.

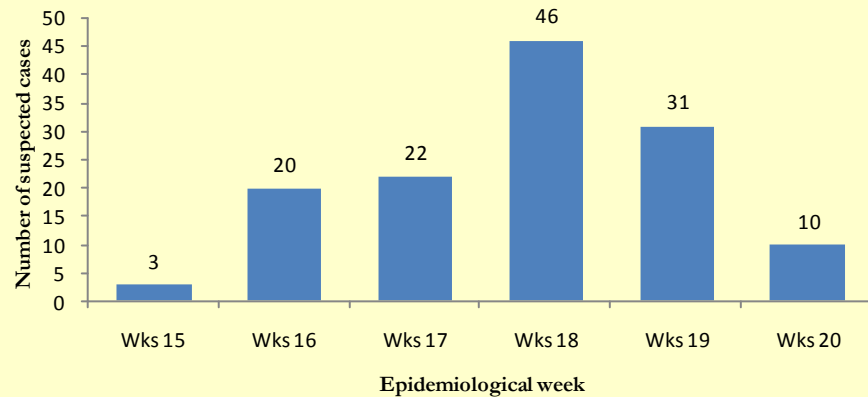
Editorial note

Meningococcal meningitis is a serious infection of the meninges surrounding the human brain. It may lead to severe brain damage and its fatality rate can go over 50% of untreated cases. South Sudan is one of the countries situated in the African meningitis belt, stretching from Senegal in the west to Ethiopia in the east, in sub-Saharan region of Africa. This explains why South Sudan repeatedly faces small to multifocal meningitis outbreaks during the dry season.

The date of onset of symptoms of the first reported case, of the current outbreak in Upper Nile State, was 12 April 2013. Twenty three cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) specimens were tested using the rapid test (pastorex) and results showed that 17 cases were positive for *Neisseria meningitidis* (Nm) sero group A. Four specimens were also positive by culture for NmA. This is a localized focal outbreak compared to the previous outbreaks reported in South Sudan in the past (*Please see the table*). Normally, during the dry season, the country faces repeated outbreaks. The current low number of cases and deaths reported shows that the outbreak is localized and has not spread widely.

Following this outbreak, South Sudan started a reactive mass vaccination campaign, with Nm A conjugate vaccine, on 14 May 2013. The target population of this campaign is 220,000 persons within the age group 2 to 29 years old. It is expected that, following this vaccination campaign, the current outbreak will be controlled and the morbidity and mortality rates will be reduced. Recently, South

Epi-Curve for suspected meningococcal meningitis cases by epi-week in Malakal, Upper Nile State, South Sudan, 12 April - 17 May 2013



Reported meningococcal disease outbreak in South Sudan (2006-2013)

Year	Cases	Deaths	CFR
2006	2039	258	12.6%
2007	884	83	9.3%
2008	114	15	13.1%
2009	363	-	-
2010	229	-	-
2013	132	5	3.7%

Sudan conducted an epidemic risk assessment for meningitis with technical support from WHO/EMRO, the Inter-country Support Team and WHO/AFRO based in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso (*Please see WEM, Volume 6 Issue 10 Sunday 17 March 2013*). The risk assessment, using surveillance data from 1999 to 2005, epidemic meningitis data from 2006 to 2009 and also from 2010 to 2012; identified over 5.6 million people living in 10 states of South Sudan at considerable risk of epidemic meningitis.

In August 2013, South Sudan will apply to GAVI for support in procuring meningitis conjugate vaccines to protect its vulnerable people for life from the recurrent threats of epidemic of meningitis. Starting from October 2013, it is expected that the newly independent country may complete vaccinating its population at risk with meningitis conjugate vaccines in three phases by the year 2015. This, hopefully, will lead to total prevention of meningitis sero group A threats of the country in the coming years.

Update on outbreaks

Novel Coronavirus in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar & UAE; **Hepatitis E** in South Sudan; **Meningococcal meningitis** in South Sudan; **Wild poliovirus** in Somalia.

Current public health events of international concern

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

Avian influenza

Egypt	[173 (63), 36.4%]
Indonesia	[192 (160), 83.3 %]
Viet Nam	[125 (62), 49.6%]
Cambodia	[31 (27), 87.1%]
Global total	[629 (375), 59.6%]

Hepatitis E

South Sudan	[10222 (187), 1.8%]#
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Novel coronavirus

Saudi Arabia	[31 (15), 48.3%]
Qatar	[2 (0)]
Jordan	[2 (2), 100%]
UK	[3 (2), 66.6%]
UAE	[1 (1), 100%]
France	[2 (0)]

Influenza A (H7N9) virus

China	[131 (36) 27.4%]#
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Meningococcal meningitis

South Sudan	[132 (5), 3.7%] #
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Wild poliovirus

Somalia	[1 (0)]
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CFR=Case-Fatality Rate; # Suspected cases