

Current major event

Hepatitis E in South Sudan: The sufferings continue among the refugees

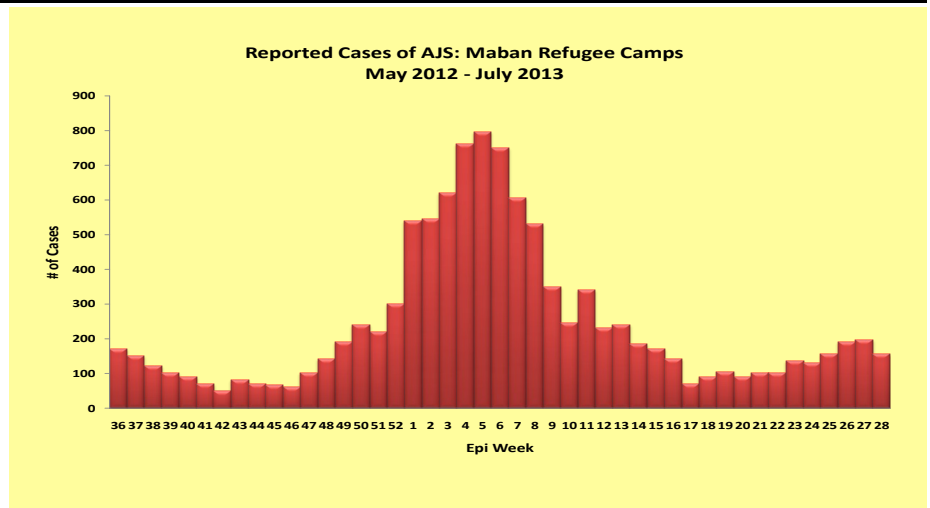
South Sudan has reported 185 suspected cases of viral hepatitis E during epidemiological week 28. There was one related death. Over 80% of these cases were reported from the ongoing outbreaks in the refugee camps in Maban. Since the beginning of the outbreak in May 2012, a total of 11,779 and 219 related deaths have been reported from these camps. Right from the outset, UNHCR, WHO and other health partners have been supporting the Ministry of Health, Government of South Sudan, in controlling this outbreak. .

Editorial note

On this day (28 July 2013), when the rest of the World is commemorating the World Hepatitis Day, the Sudanese refugees in the Maban and Yida refugee camps in South Sudan are living in the realities of the disease. An outbreak of viral hepatitis E has been going on in these camps since May 2012. So far, over 11,779 people have been infected with the virus of which 219 were fatal.

Efforts to control this waterborne disease has been going on and WHO, UNHCR and other health partners have been working with the Ministry of Health to control this scourge. Response and control measures have included several risk assessments and a lot of efforts have been made to strengthen surveillance, increase case findings and improve case management. Environmental assessments carried out by the water and sanitation units in these camps found that the water, sanitation and overall hygiene in the camps were extremely poor and was the main cause of the outbreak. Since then a lot of efforts has been made to improve the water, sanitations and hygiene in the camps by MOH, the UN agencies including WHO. This has slowed down the spread of the disease but has not stopped it altogether.

The World Hepatitis Day was first celebrated last year (2012) across the globe to raise public awareness to the risk and



Reported cases and deaths of hepE in Maban Refugee Camps

Camp	Cases	Deaths	CFR (%)
Maban	11,279	205	1.8
Yida	500	14	2.8
Total	11,779	219	1.8

burden of viral hepatitis for individuals and communities and also to strengthen prevention and control efforts of viral hepatitis and its related disease. The global theme of this year's campaign is "This is hepatitis. Know it. Confront it".

Viral hepatitis affects 1 in every 12 people worldwide. Viral hepatitis A and E are typically caused by ingestion of contaminated food and water. While hepatitis B, C and D are spread by infected body fluids, including blood or blood products, contaminated medical equipment, by sexual contact and from mother-to-child during birth.

On this day we need to remember all those who are suffering from viral hepatitis and/or its complications. This includes vulnerable groups like the refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in squalid camps in many countries of our Region. An increased number of cases of viral hepatitis A have also been reported from displaced camps in Syria. Thus planning for hepatitis control programs in the EMR should include the water/food borne viral hepatitis A and E also deserve some attention.

Update on outbreaks

in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

Novel Coronavirus in Saudi Arabia, UAE & Tunisia; **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	[11,779 (219), 1.8%]
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Novel Coronavirus (MERS-CoV)

Saudi Arabia	[72 (40), 55.5%]
Italy	[3 (0)]
Jordan	[2 (2), 100%]
France	[2 (1), 50%]
UAE	[7 (2), 28.6%]
Tunisia	[2 (0)]

Influenza A (H7N9) virus

China	[134 (43), 32%]
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Meningococcal meningitis

South Sudan	[196 (13), 6.6%]
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Wild poliovirus

Somalia	[95 (0)]
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CFR=Case-Fatality Rate; # Suspected cases