

## Current major event

### Human brucellosis in Syria

The early warning surveillance system of the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Syria registered significant increase in number of human brucellosis cases in the country in recent time (mainly during the epidemiological week- 25; June 2013).

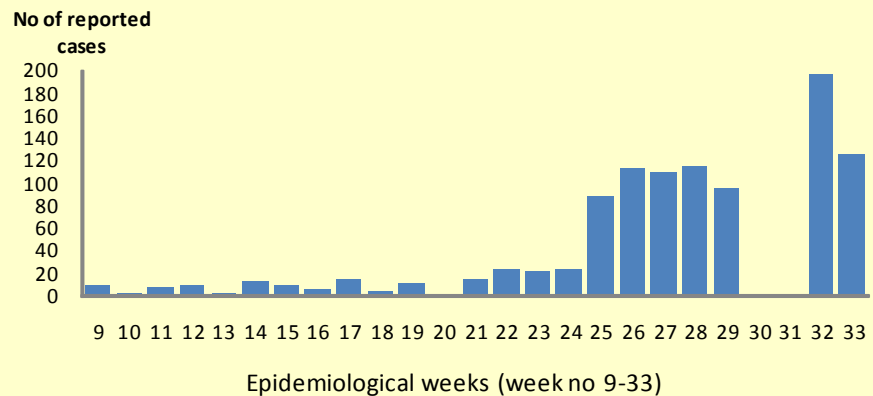
### Editorial note

Brucellosis is an old disease with minimal mortality. Yet human brucellosis remains the commonest zoonotic disease worldwide with more than 500 000 new cases annually. The Eastern Mediterranean Region of WHO, particularly the countries in the Middle East has traditionally been considered as endemic for human brucellosis. Five of the ten countries with the highest incidence for human brucellosis (Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran and Lebanon) are in this area.

Human brucellosis is known to be endemic in Syria with more than 10,000 cases reported annually since 2009 (*Please see the table*). The weekly reported cases was consistently less than 40 cases up to week 24 of 2013, a level far less than pre-conflict incidence of between 200-350 cases per week. This is because of fewer reporting health facilities and mainly those confined to government controlled parts of the country. However, significant increase in reported cases was noted from week 25 which could not be explained solely by improvement in EWARN network and reporting, or by increase in number of consultations. As of week 33, the general upward trend of human brucellosis cases continued, although many of these cases are not laboratory-confirmed.

The current upsurge detected by the EWARN system of the MoH/Syria has been attributed to the impact of the ongoing conflict on the national brucellosis control programme and erosion of veterinary services in the country. Veterinary control activities such as animal vaccination has been affected by shortages of vaccines, shortages of veterinary drugs and dairy services have been disrupted by power outages. These conditions can lead to major out break of

Figure-1: Human brucellosis cases in Syria



Human brucellosis cases reported in Syria from 2009 to 2013

Year	Reported cases
2009	14,764
2010	19,213
2011	16,535
2012	10,268
2013	1,123

Source: Ministry of Health, Syria

human brucellosis in Syria and also puts neighboring countries at increased risk of cross border spread of the disease through movement of people as well as unvaccinated animals across the border. Many of the neighboring countries of Syria– Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon also have known foci for human brucellosis. It is important, therefore, that enhanced surveillance is in place in all these neighbouring countries for early detection of any upsurge in the reported cases of human brucellosis.

Brucellosis is primarily a disease of animals. Infection in people is acquired from cattle (*Brucella abortus*), dogs (*B. canis*), pigs (*B. suis*), or sheep and goats (*B. melitensis*), usually by direct contact with infected animals or by consumption of unpasteurized (raw) milk or cheese. Prevention of the disease requires close collaboration between the human and animal health sectors to ensure effective control measures in animals as well as to institute adequate measures to minimize exposure such as consumption of unpasteurized milk / milk products and direct contact with animals.

## Update on outbreaks

in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

**MERS-CoV** in Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar & Tunisia; **Hepatitis E** 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), <b>36.4%</b> ]
Indonesia	[192 (160), <b>83.3 %</b> ]
Viet Nam	[125 (62), <b>49.6%</b> ]
Cambodia	[31 (27), <b>87.1%</b> ]
Global total	[629 (375), <b>59.6%</b> ]

### Hepatitis E

South Sudan	[11,637 (209), <b>1.8%</b> ] <sup>#</sup>
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### Novel Coronavirus (MERS-CoV)

Saudi Arabia	[88 (44), <b>50%</b> ]
Italy	[2 (0)]
Jordan	[3 (2), <b>66%</b> ]
France	[1 (0)]
UAE	[7 (3), <b>42.8%</b> ]
Qatar	[5 (2), <b>40%</b> ]
Tunisia	[3 (1), <b>33%</b> ]

### Influenza A (H7N9) virus

China	[135 (44), <b>32.6%</b> ]
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### Meningococcal meningitis

South Sudan	[196 (13), <b>6.6%</b> ] <sup>#</sup>
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### Wild poliovirus

Somalia	[163 (0)]
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CFR=Case-Fatality Rate; # Suspected cases