

Current major event

MERS-CoV in Qatar

On 18 October, WHO was informed of a new laboratory-confirmed case of Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) infection in Qatar. The patient is a 61-year-old man with underlying medical conditions who was admitted to a hospital on 11 October 2013. He is currently hospitalized and is in a stable condition. The patient was tested positive for MERS-CoV infection in Qatar and was confirmed by the reference laboratory of Public Health England in the United Kingdom.

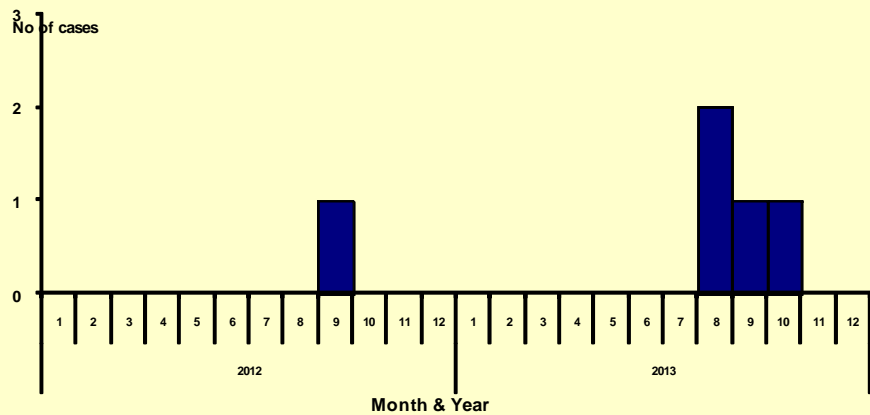
Editorial note

Globally, from September 2012 to date, WHO has been informed of a total of 139 laboratory-confirmed cases of infection with MERS-CoV including 60 deaths. Of these, a total of 136 laboratory-confirmed cases of MERS-CoV infections including 59 deaths were reported from the Eastern Mediterranean Region (*Please see the table*).

With the recent case of MERS-CoV infection, a total of 5 cases including 2 deaths have now been reported from Qatar. The preliminary investigations into the recently reported case revealed that the patient had not travelled outside Qatar in the two weeks prior to becoming ill. The patient owns a farm and has had significant contact with the animals, including camels, sheep and hens. Some of the animals in his farm have been tested and were negative for MERS-CoV. It has been revealed that further investigations into the case and the animals in the farm are currently ongoing with assistance from WHO.

Our current understanding of the epidemiology, transmission patterns and disease manifestations of MERS-CoV infection is severely limited by gaps in our knowledge on the origin of this virus itself. Several lines of evidence, though, support the hypothesis that the virus has its origin in animals, it is still unclear if there are any intermediary infected animal (s) from which humans are being

Laboratory-confirmed cases of MERS-CoV reported from Qatar to WHO by month of illness onset, as of 18 October 2013



Laboratory-confirmed cases of MERS-CoV infections reported from the EMR, as of 18 October 2013

Country	Cases	Deaths
Saudi Arabia	119	51
Qatar	5	2
Jordan	2	2
UAE	7	3
Tunisia	3	1
Total	136	59

infected. Although several investigations in animals are ongoing, MERS-CoV has not yet been identified in any animal sources in the Middle East or elsewhere. The current evidence, so far, suggests that the virus is most closely related genetically to a virus found in bats and there is serological evidence of infections in camels.

The preliminary investigation into the recent case reported from Qatar has revealed contact with animals. This first-hand information provides an opportunity to conduct an in-depth study on the possible exposures and history of contacts with animals that might have resulted in the infection. As currently the Supreme Health Council of Qatar is investigating this recent infection in collaboration with WHO, it is expected that a proper study including animal studies if required, will be conducted to identify the source of infection including the route of transmission of this novel virus.

Update on outbreaks

in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

Novel Coronavirus in Qatar; **Hepatitis E**: in South Sudan; **Wild poliovirus** in Somalia and Sudan.

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	[11,897 (235), 1.9%]#
-------------	-----------------------

Novel Coronavirus (MERS-CoV)

Saudi Arabia	[119 (51), 43%]
UAE	[7 (3), 42.8%]
Qatar	[5 (2), 40%]
Tunisia	[3 (1), 33%]

Influenza A (H7N9) virus

China	[135 (44), 32.6%]
-------	-------------------

Crimen-Congo haemorrhagic fever

Pakistan	[77 (15), 19.4%]
----------	------------------

Wild poliovirus

South Sudan	[3 (0)]
Somalia	[171 (0)]

CFR=Case-Fatality Rate; # Suspected cases