

Current major event

WHO conducts Training on EWARNS in Syria

A team from WHO/EMRO and WHO/Syria country office completed a four-day training workshop in Damascus, Syria from 13-16 April 2014. The training was requested by the WHO Country Representative to target Governorate Health managers from the Ministry of Health and WHO focal persons responsible for health service delivery in the Governorates. A total of 28 participants representing 14 Governorates attended.

Editorial note

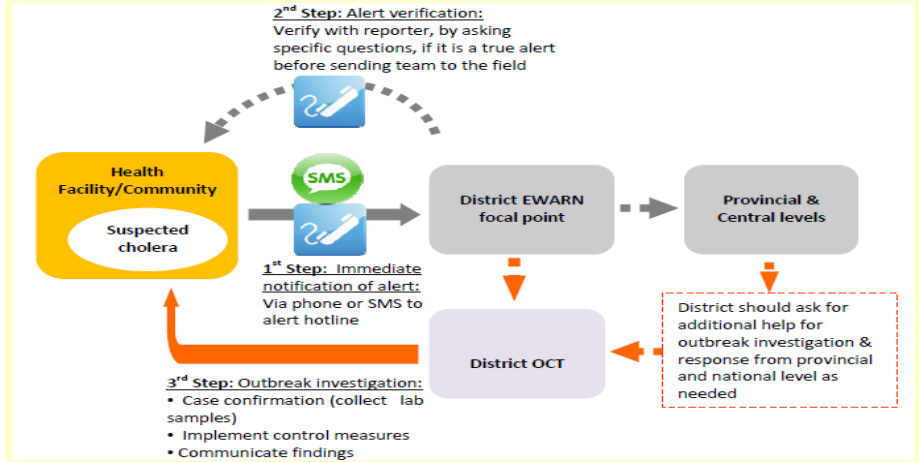
An estimated 6.5 million people are internally displaced; more than 64% of hospitals and 38% of primary health care facilities have been damaged by the ongoing complex emergency that started in 2011 in Syria.

The Ministry of Health and WHO have organized this training on the Disease Early Warning Surveillance System as a response to the crisis. The objectives of the Early Warning Alert and Response System (EWARNS) in humanitarian crisis workshop were to train national surveillance staff on EWARNS principles and operations; epidemiological indicators and data analysis; data interpretation and feedback; and outbreak investigation and response to communicable disease outbreaks in emergencies.

Groups of relevant epidemic prone diseases that were addressed in greater detail by the training workshop included vaccine preventable diseases, waterborne diseases, vector-borne diseases, and airborne diseases in humanitarian emergency situations. These contents were covered through presentation sessions; case studies, groups works and exercises; and discussion sessions.

This is one of the ongoing trainings supported by WHO to improve EWARNS for early detection and response to outbreaks of epidemic prone diseases in Syria and neighboring countries that

Steps in notification, verification, investigation and outbreak response in EWARNS



Source: WHO Guideline for EWARNS Implementation http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/2012/WHO_HSE_GAR_DCE_2012_1_eng.pdf

Achievements of EWARNS, so far, in detecting unusual health events in Syria

- Measles outbreaks
- Typhoid fever outbreak
- Poliomyelitis outbreak
- Acute bloody diarrheal disease outbreak
- Abnormal increase in deaths from seasonal Influenza
- Upsurge of hepatitis A cases
- Seasonal increase of Brucellosis cases

have been affected by the crisis..

Since the establishment of EWARNS in Syria in September 2012, the system has successfully detected infectious disease epidemics (please see the above table). The system detected the first case of cases of poliomyelitis in Syria after more than 13 years. Other outbreaks detected by the EWARNS in Syria include measles, typhoid, acute bloody diarrhea and hepatitis. Other unusual occurrence patterns of communicable diseases that have been detected through the system include increase in influenza deaths which has been confirmed to be related to the influenza A (H1N1) pdm09. Timely detection and response to these outbreaks averted spread, major outbreaks, and excess morbidity and mortality..

The knowledge acquired in the training must be complimented by adequate resources to ensure efficient operation of EWARNS including effective and timely outbreak investigation and response to disease outbreaks in all the affected countries.

Update on outbreaks

in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

Novel Coronavirus in Saudi Arabia and UAE

Current public health events of international concern

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

Avian Influenza A (H5N1): 2003-2014

Egypt	[175 (63), 36%]
Indonesia	[195 (163), 83.6 %]
Viet Nam	[126 (63), 50%]
Global total	[666 (391), 58.7%]

MERS-CoV: 2012-2014

Saudi Arabia	[371 (107), 28.8%]
Jordan	[5 (3), 60 %]
Oman	[2 (2), 100%]
UAE	[49 (8), 16.3%]
Kuwait	[3 (1), 33.3%]
Tunisia	[3 (1), 33.3%]
Qatar	[9 (5), 60%]

Ebola Hemorrhagic Fever:

Guinea	[224 (143), 63.8%]
Liberia	[35 (11), 31.4%]

Wild poliovirus: 2013-2014

Pakistan	[142 (0), 0%]
Afghanistan	[17 (0), 0%]
Syria	[36 (0), 0%]
Somalia	[194(0), 0%]
Iraq	[1 (0), 0%]

CFR=Case-Fatality Rate; # Suspected cases