

Current major event

Emerging Infectious Diseases on the rise in the EMR

In 2015, a number of countries in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) reported emerging infectious diseases (EID). Some countries reported explosive outbreaks from these EIDs.

Editorial note

The occurrence of EIDs in the EMR of WHO is certainly on the rise. A number of countries in the region have reported the occurrence and emergence of high number of infectious diseases in 2015 that had epidemic potentials. In some countries, these diseases exacerbated into explosive outbreaks owing to a number of risk factors.

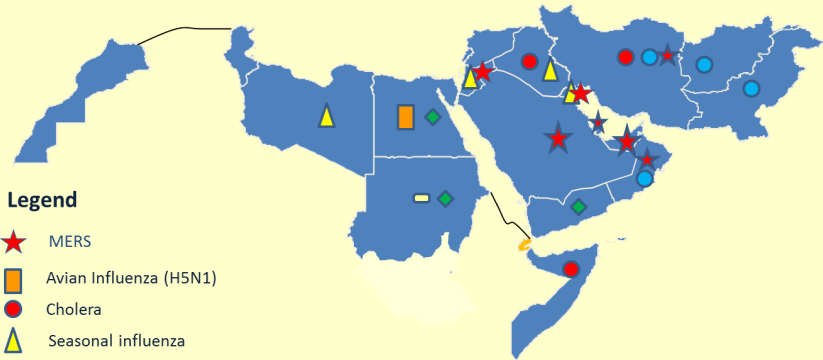
The Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) continues to circulate in the region and in two countries (Saudi Arabia and Jordan), hospital outbreaks from MERS-CoV have been reported in 2015 with high case fatality rate.

Beginning in October-November in 2014, Egypt witnessed a surge in human infections from avian influenza (H5N1) virus that continued until the spring of 2015. Towards the later half of the year, Egypt also reported dengue fever, possibly after two to three decades.

The Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever (CCHF) continues to circulate in the endemic belt of the EMR that includes Pakistan, Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran. What has been observed this year that in addition to these three endemic countries, the CCHF virus has made a geographic spread to Oman which is rather a worrying sign for the extension and entrenchment of this emerging virus in other non-endemic countries where the animal reservoir of this virus still remains unknown.

Cholera has re-emerged in the region in 2015. While, Somalia, one of the most endemic countries in the region, continues to report cholera cases, travel-associated imported cases of cholera has been reported in 2015 from Lebanon, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, Iran and Kuwait.

Emerging Infectious Diseases reported from the Eastern Mediterranean Region, 2015



Legend

- ★ MERS
- Avian Influenza (H5N1)
- Cholera
- ▲ Seasonal influenza
- ◆ Dengue fever
- Haemorrhagic fever (Unknown)
- Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever

Some reported outbreaks from EID in the EMR in 2015

Country	Disease	Case	Death	CFR (%)
Egypt	AI (H5N1)	129	33	26
Iraq	Cholera	4915	2	
Saudi Arabia	MERS	448	185	41.2
Sudan	VHF	469	120	26
Jordan	MERS	12	4	33

While the Islamic Republic of Iran, another cholera endemic country in the region, has periodically reported cholera cases, an outbreak was reported from Iraq after a gap of nearly 3 years. The outbreak threatened to be spilled over to the neighbouring countries owing to frequent cross-border movement between Iraq and other conflict affected neighbouring countries.

In Sudan, dengue has reemerged in its traditionally endemic belt (on the coast line of Red sea). In addition, the country also reported viral haemorrhagic fever of unknown illness that resulted in high mortality amongst the suspected cases.

The emergence of such a high number of infectious diseases with epidemic potentials warrant that all countries should have a strong surveillance and laboratory diagnostic system as well as a rapid response structure for early detection and response to contain and limit transmission from these infections. Building and maintaining the public health core capacities as required under the IHR (2005) remains a top priority.

Update on outbreaks

in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

MERS-CoV in Saudi Arabia; Cholera in Iraq

Current public health events of international concern [cumulative N° of cases (deaths), CFR %]

Avian Influenza : 2006-2015

Egypt (A/H5N1)	[346 (117), 33.8%]
Egypt (A/H9N2)	[3 (0)]

MERS-CoV: 2012-2015

Saudi Arabia	[1277 (549), 42.9%]
Jordan	[18 (8), 44%]
Oman	[6 (3), 50%]
UAE	[75 (10), 13.3%]
Kuwait	[3 (1), 33.3%]
Republic of Korea	[186 (36), 19.3%]
Qatar	[12 (4), 33.3%]
Iran	[6 (2), 33.3%]

Cholera

Iraq	[4915 (2)]
Tanzania	[9871 (150), 1.5%]

Ebola Virus Disease: 2014-2015

Guinea	[3804 (2536), 66.6%]
Liberia	[10666 (4806), 45%]
Sierra Leone	[14122 (3955), 28%]

Viral Haemorrhagic Fever (of unknown aetiology)

Sudan	[469 (120), 26%]
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Wild poliovirus: 2015

Pakistan	[49 (0)]
Afghanistan	[17(0)]

Dengue

Egypt	[253(0)]
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