

Current major event

Outbreaks reported in 2016

In the year 2016, several major outbreaks from emerging and re-emerging diseases including cholera in Somalia and Yemen; MERS-CoV in Saudi Arabia; Chikungunya in Somalia, Pakistan and Crimean–Congo Haemorrhagic fever in Pakistan were reported in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR).

Editorial note

The occurrence of emerging infectious diseases including the outbreaks have occurred in recent years in countries with complex and protracted humanitarian emergencies where large populations are internally displaced and there is inadequate access to clean water, sanitation and basic health services. This trend continued in 2016 with a number of outbreaks reported from countries in protracted crisis. One of the challenges faced in 2016 was that the disease surveillance system in fragile health systems of these countries may not have detected all health threats early and in a timely manner. This might have compromised the effectiveness of public health response measures and made population more vulnerable to the threats of common and endemic-prone infectious diseases.

In the year 2016, sporadic cases of avian influenza A (H5N1) infections continued to be reported from Egypt (*Please see the table above*). In addition, cholera were reported from Somalia and Yemen while for the first time ever, Chikungunya fever was officially reported from Pakistan and Somalia. Cases of Crimean–Congo Haemorrhagic Fever (CCHF), another endemic threat in Pakistan, surpassed the number previously reported in the past.

Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV), another persistent emerging disease threat in the Region continued to circulate in 2016. Bahrain, for the first time ever, reported its first laboratory-confirmed case. Other countries that reported MERS cases in the Region in 2016 include Oman, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and United Arab Emirates (UAE). While transmission continued in

Infectious Disease outbreaks reported in the EMR in 2016

Disease	Country	Cases	Deaths	Last reported case
Avian Influenza	Egypt	10	4	28/07/2016
Chikungunya	Pakistan	353	0	30/12/2016
	Somalia	11	0	31/05/2016
Cholera	Somalia	15619	548	31/12/2016
	Yemen	15704	98	31/12/2016
CCHF	Pakistan	431	60	19/10/2016
Dengue	Yemen	28,185	65	30/12/2016
MERS	Saudi Arabia	240	70	30/12/2016
	UAE	3	1	09/06/2016
	Qatar	3	1	08/06/2016

Strategies for early detection and response to outbreaks

- Enhancing surveillance for real-time detection of outbreak and public health events;
- Improving laboratory diagnostic capacity for emerging infections;
- Establishing Rapid Response Teams for timely investigation;
- Strengthening inter-sectoral and multidisciplinary collaboration

Saudi Arabia through out the year, cases were not reported from Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and UAE since the last reported case.

Owing to various factors such as population mobility, rapid urbanization, increasing interactions between humans and animals, climate change and environmental degradation, the incidence of emerging infectious disease is increasing rapidly throughout the region. In addition, crisis and protracted emergencies are making the health systems extremely fragile and surveillance system dilapidated. In this situation, it is imperative that all countries (*please see above*), develop its own country specific strategies to deal with the perpetual threats of emerging diseases through enhancing surveillance and response capacities at all levels. This would require targeted and focused intervention with strong political commitments from all sectors and not necessarily from health sector alone. Outbreaks are threats to national, regional and global health security. As such these threats need to be tackled in an inclusive manner.

Update on outbreaks

in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

MERS-CoV in Saudi Arabia; Cholera in Somalia; Cholera in Yemen; Chikungunya in Pakistan;

Current public health events of international concern

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

Avian Influenza : 2006-2017

Egypt (A/H5N1)	[356 (121), 33.9%]
Egypt (A/H9N2)	[3 (0)]

Chikungunya

Pakistan	[230 (0)]
----------	-----------

MERS-CoV: 2012-2017

Saudi Arabia	[1414 (601), 42.5%]
--------------	---------------------

Cholera : 2016-2017

Somalia	[14 710 (497), 3.3%]
Yemen	[12773 (97), 0.76%]

Rift Valley Fever : 2016-2017

Niger	[266(32), 12%]
-------	----------------

Avian Influenza A (H7N9) : 2013-2017

China	[808(307),36%]
-------	----------------

Avian Influenza A (H5N6) : 2016-2017

China	[4 (0)]
-------	---------

Wild poliovirus: 2014-2017

Pakistan	[379(0)]
Afghanistan	[60(0)]

Zika Virus Infection: 2015-2017

69 countries and territories have reported transmission so far