

Current major event

Cholera outbreak continues in Yemen

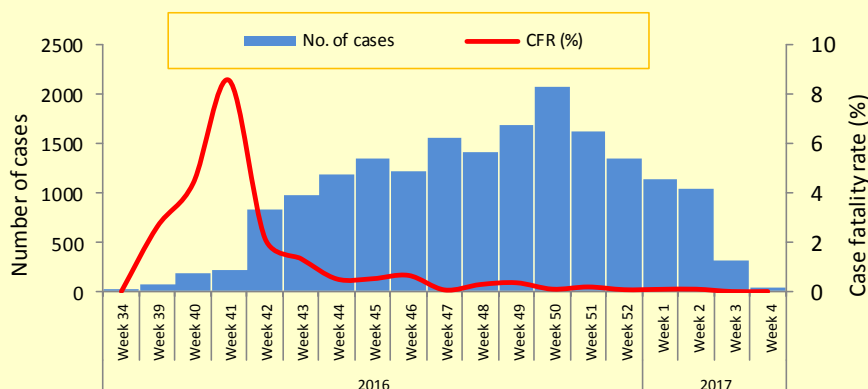
Yemen has been experiencing a cholera outbreak that started in early August 2016. As of 1 February, 2017, a cumulative number of 18, 848 suspected Cholera cases including 97 associated deaths (case fatality rate 0.86%) have been reported from 157 districts in 15 governorates.

Editorial note

Even though Yemen is endemic for cholera and outbreaks of the disease that have occurred in the past, the ongoing outbreak has occurred over long period of time and has affected large number of people compared to any previous cholera outbreak in the country. This is owing to the fact that the country is in the middle of protracted conflict that has displaced more than 3 million individuals who are forced to leave in overcrowded and sub-standard housing or temporary forms of shelter. Millions more have been affected by the collapse of basic services including the health system, as well as the damaged civil infrastructure, such as water and sanitation facilities in the most parts of the country. These conditions have contributed to an increased risk of infectious disease outbreaks including a large outbreak of Dengue fever that was witnessed in 2015, and now the current cholera outbreak.

During the current outbreak, the most affected governorates include Al-Hudaidah with reported 3962 suspected cholera cases (21%), followed by Taiz with 2731 cases (14%) and Albyda'a with 1944 suspected cases. Other governorates that have reported high numbers of suspected cases include Ibb with 1818 suspected cases, and Aden with 1645 suspected cases. Key components of the cholera outbreak preparedness and response strategy for Yemen have been activated by the MOH and partners including WHO. These include multiple-sectoral coordination mechanism under the overall coordination of the MOH with technical and operational support

Suspected cases of cholera and case fatality rate by epidemiological week in Yemen, 2016-2017



from WHO and other humanitarian agencies through the health cluster mechanism. Other outbreak response coordination centers have been established in affected governorates including Sana'a, Aden, Al-Hudaydah and Taiz; 26 diarrhea (cholera) treatment centers have been established in the affected governorates; physicians and paramedical staff trained on case management; and surveillance has been enhanced to improve case detection. Community preventive measures have included health education and household level water treatment using chlorine tablets.

This outbreak has affected a large number of people and governorates compared to previous cholera outbreaks in the country. This underscores the important role humanitarian disasters and associated aggravating risk factors such as poor water and sanitation, poor access to health care, as well as overcrowding, play in amplification of disease outbreaks. It is also worth noting that even though this was one of the largest cholera outbreaks in the country, this has lasted for a much shorter duration compared to past outbreaks. This may be attributed to large presence of humanitarian urgencies that have contributed to the response despite access difficulties. Currently (*please see the epidemic curve above*), the outbreak might be waning as few cases are being reported compared to the period in 2016 when the outbreak started. It has to be seen in the coming days if the trend of decline remains the same.

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 [472 (0)]

MERS-CoV: 2012-2017

Saudi Arabia [1547 (626), 40%]

Cholera : 2016-2017

Somalia [1 7823 (544), 3%]
Yemen [18848 (99), 0.52%]

Rift Valley Fever : 2016-2017

Niger [266(32), 12%]

Avian Influenza A (H7N9) : 2013-2017

China [918(307),33.4%]

Yellow fever

Brazil [404 (84), 20%]

Wild poliovirus: 2014-2017

Pakistan [379(0)]
Afghanistan [61(0)]

Zika Virus Infection: 2015-2017

69 countries and territories have reported transmission so far