

Current major event

Implementing EBS in Palestine

The Ministry of Health of the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) conducted a workshop on implementation of Event Based Surveillance (EBS) system. Recent outbreaks of MERS-CoV, Zika and Ebola in different parts of the world are reminders of the need to enhance national early warning capacity through establishment of EBS.

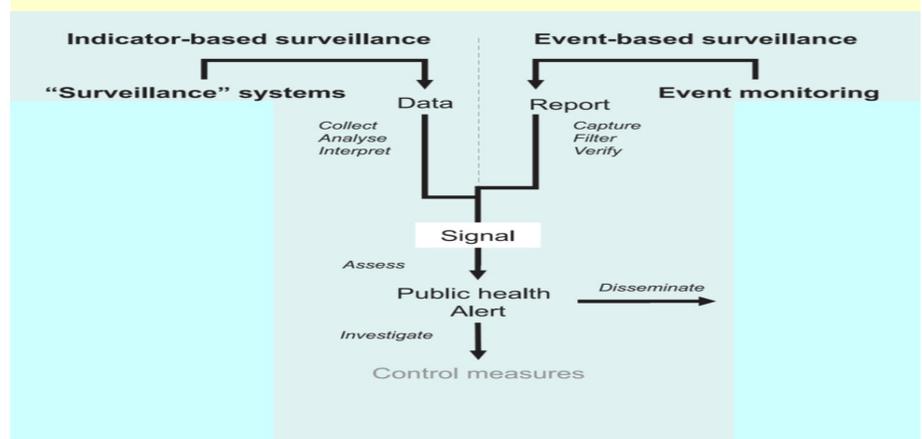
Editorial note

There is growing recognition of the need for a comprehensive approach to early warning for disease surveillance that has syndromic, immediate notification and weekly reporting component of the indicator based surveillance system. An effective EBS system can complement the early warning system of an indicator based surveillance system. This is because early signals of an event of public health significance are often present in the community way before they can be picked up by the health systems or its routine disease surveillance system. Examples include industrial accidents, chemical spills, food poisoning event in the community.

Early signals that suggest an event of potential public health consequence may also be occurring are often available in other sectors outside health. These include sero-surveys done by animal sectors that may show presence of infection in animals or birds, such as brucellosis or influenza, with potential for human spread through handling or consumption of food. Other examples may be "sudden die-off" of animals or birds that may provide early signals of a zoonotic event. Some other examples include sudden absenteeism of students in large numbers from schools during a certain period of the year which may signal an unusual event such as influenza or any other diseases that are easily transmissible in closed communities.

The West Bank and Gaza strip of the oPt may not have faced large scale outbreaks or similar public health events in recent time, but the political turmoil in the country, protracted confinements

EBS for a Comprehensive Early Warning Surveillance System



and seize, resulting in loss of economic opportunities for the country, demographic pressure in one of high density populations, failing health systems and lack of access to healthcare services make the country extremely vulnerable to public health events of potential concerns.

In view of these challenging geopolitical and economic hardships, which often aggravate health security threats, the National Institute of Public health of oPt with support from WHO, collaborated with the ministry of health to organize a two day workshop in West Bank and Gaza that brought together senior leadership and technical staff from key sectors including Ministry of Health, Central Public Health Lab, and Ministry of Agriculture in order to develop an EBS as complimentary to the country's indicator-based surveillance system.

The process of developing the EBS took into consideration the current disease detection and monitoring practices in the various sectors, the need to extend the current early warning disease surveillance practices beyond the health system to the community and other sectors and opportunities for collaboration.

The key implementation requirements will now need to be focused on defining events, sources of data collection, process of event filter, verification and assessment as well as means of communication and information sharing mechanisms between the different sectors.

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)]
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MERS-CoV: 2012-2017

Saudi Arabia	[1547 (626), 40%]
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Cholera : 2016-2017

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

Rift Valley Fever : 2016-2017

Niger	[266(32), 12%]
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Avian Influenza A (H7N9) : 2013-2017

China	[918(307),33.4%]
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Yellow fever

Brazil	[404 (84), 20%]
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Wild poliovirus: 2014-2017

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

Zika Virus Infection: 2015-2017

69 countries and territories have reported transmission so far