

## Current major event

### MERS Outbreak in Al-Khafji City, Saudi Arabia

Between 29<sup>th</sup> of March and 17<sup>th</sup> of April, the Ministry of Health of Saudi Arabia reported a total of 13 laboratory-confirmed cases of MERS including 6 associated deaths from Al-Khafji city. More than 60% (8) of the cases acquired the infection from health care contact and a total of 5 healthcare workers were infected as well.

#### Editorial note

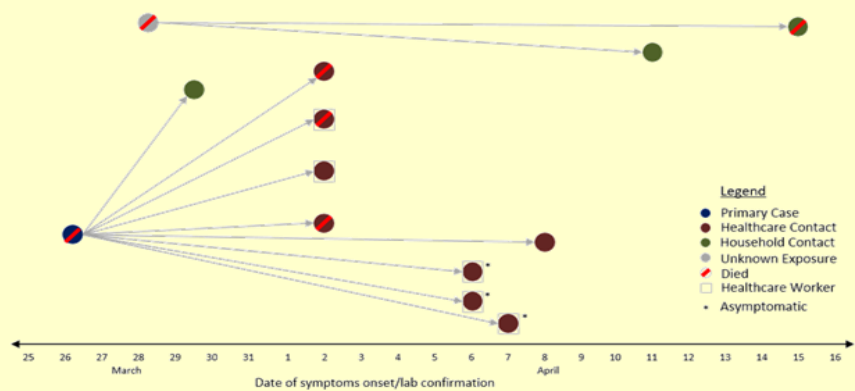
Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) is a viral respiratory illness caused by a coronavirus (MERS-CoV). The MERS virus is transmitted primarily from infected dromedary camels to people. The MERS virus does not pass easily between people unless there is close unprotected contact mainly within health care setting which might cause clusters and outbreaks. At least 22 hospital outbreaks have occurred since 2015 including 373 cases and 111 associated deaths (CFR: 29.7%) (see table). Even more concerning, 28.9% (108 cases) of these total reported cases were healthcare workers (HCWs).

On beginning of April 2019, The Ministry of Health of Saudi Arabia reported a new cluster of MERS cases in Al-Khafji city. A total of 13 laboratory-confirmed cases of MERS (including 6 deaths) were reported during the period from 29<sup>th</sup> March to 27<sup>th</sup> April 2019. Out of these 13 laboratory-confirmed cases, 10 cases were males. The age ranged from 24 to 75 years with average of 50.2 years. The 13 reported cases are linked to two clusters:

The first cluster of cases involved a total of 10 laboratory-confirmed MERS cases, including 4 deaths. The primary case had a history of contact with dromedaries. Five of these cases were HCW that contracted the infection in the hospital. One of the HCW passed away. Three other cases were hospital acquired as well and two of them passed away. The second cluster had been reported with total of 3 laboratory-confirmed MERS cases including 2 death. There are two household secondary laboratory-confirmed cases linked to a case with unknown exposure (see transmission chain).

In response to this hospital outbreak, the

### Transmission Chain of MERS Outbreak reported from Al-Khafji city, KSA , 2019



### Cases and deaths from Hospital outbreaks in Saudi Arabia, 2015-2019

Year	Hospital outbreaks	Total Cases	Survived	Died	HCW
2015	4	138	71	67	19
2016	6	60	46	14	26
2017	8	91	79	12	41
2018	2	10	6	4	3
2019	2	74	60	14	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>108</b>

Ministry of Health has activated the timely investigations and enhanced the infection prevention and control measures within the affected healthcare facility. All contacts, including households and healthcare workers are being screened and followed up. Ministry of Agriculture has been informed and investigation of camels is underway.

WHO is in regular contact with MOH and will follow up on their ongoing investigations and implementation of appropriate control measures.

WHO encourages all Member States to continue enhancing their surveillance for acute respiratory infections and to carefully review any unusual patterns. Infection prevention and control (IPC) measures are critical to prevent the possible spread of MERS-CoV within health care facilities. Early identification, case management and isolation, together with appropriate infection prevention and control measures can prevent human-to-human transmission of MERS-CoV. WHO does not advise special screening at points of entry with regard to this event nor does it currently recommend the application of any travel or trade restrictions.

### Update on outbreaks

in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

**MERS** in Saudi Arabia; **MERS** in Oman; **cholera** in Somalia; **cholera** in Yemen; **Multidrug-resistant typhoid fever** in Pakistan.

### Current public health events of concern

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

#### Avian influenza: 2006-2017

Egypt (A/H5N1) [359 (122), 33.98%]

Egypt (A/H9N2) [4 (0)]

#### Ebola virus disease (EVD): 2018-2019

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) [1 554 (1 028), 66.15%]

#### Cholera: 2017-2019

Somalia [7 140 (46) , 0.64%]

Yemen [1 672 343 (3 304), 0.19%]

#### Diphtheria: 2018-2019

Yemen [3 524 (203), 5.76%]

Bangladesh [8 596 (45), 0.52%]

#### MERS: 2012-2019

Saudi Arabia [2 037 (760), 37.30%]

Oman [24 (7), 29.16%]

#### Multidrug-resistant typhoid fever: 2016-2019

Pakistan [7 075 (0) ]