

Current Event

MERS: Faith-Based Approach

Ministry of Health (MoH) is engaging the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Da'wah, and Guidance (MoIA) in the awareness campaigns against MERS.

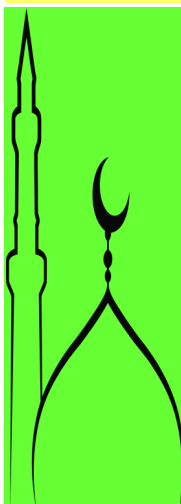
Editorial Notes

Since the emergence of MERS-CoV, Ministry of Health (MoH) has worked on raising awareness and educating the community about this infectious disease. This is going side by side with all the other efforts of surveillance, infection prevention and control and other public health measures. Collaboration and partnership of the ministry with other governmental agencies played a significant role in controlling the spread of MERS.

In some occasions there is some resistance in abiding to the precautions against MERS in the community especially in camels' locations. Social misconceptions and religious misinterpretations and misunderstanding are acting as barriers for the full cooperation to infection control precautions. Awareness and education from the health side is not merely enough and the need for expanding and engaging religious side is highly considered. Thus, the engagement of the MoIA as partners in the disease prevention including MERS outreach is part of any public health activity.

Faith-based approaches and the religious commitment can be central in transforming people's behaviors. Islam most certainly does not deny the existence of contagious diseases. In fact, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) commanded Muslims to avoid any act or situation that would lead to the transmission of infectious diseases. Infection control is inherent in Islamic hygiene behavior. Islam preceded modern societies by

Selected Topics of the Friday Khutbahs Concerning MERS



Quarantine system in Islam to control contagious diseases.

MERS and false rumors, over-reaction and panicking: avoid spreading any information without clarification from trusted sources.

Lessons from a contagious disease from the time of the prophets' companions.

Basic concepts about MERS and the prevention of infectious diseases.

General concepts of infectious diseases, causes and prevention.

Cases of MERS-CoV: International Week (IW) No. 30: 24 – 30 July 2016

Total	1
Symptomatic (S)	1
Asymptomatic (AS)	0
Healthcare worker (S)	0
Healthcare Worker (AS)	0

establishing the idea of quarantines. Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) instituted strategies that are today implemented by public health authorities.

MoH is identifying and reaching influencing religious figures to correct and clarify some concepts related to controlling the spread of diseases in Islam. Including the topic of MERS in the Friday Khutbahs (Sermon) across the regions in the Kingdom to successfully reaching vulnerable, at-risk, and hard-to-reach populations with infectious diseases education including MERS. Elaborating fatwas (Islamic rulings) in this regard and the distribution through all media channels. The Permanent Committee for Fatwa stressed no slaughter of the camels inside the holy sites in the last Hajj season to prevent the spread of MERS among the pilgrims and advised those in contact with MERS cases to postpone their Hajj to the next years for the same reason.

Recent Publications:

Cauchemez S, Nouvellet P, Cori A, Jombart T, Garske T, Clapham H, Moore S, Mills HL, Salje H, Collins C, Rodriguez-Barraquer I, Riley S, Truelove S, Algarni H, Alhakeem R, AlHarbi K, Turkistani A, Aguas RJ, Cummings DA, Van Kerkhove MD, Donnelly CA, Lessler J, Fraser C, Al-Barrak A, Ferguson NM. Unraveling the drivers of MERS-CoV transmission. Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A. 2016 Jul 25.

MERS-CoV in KSA 2016*

Region	Case	Primary	Secondary	U.C.
Riyadh	67	27	38	2
Qassim	37	11	23	3
Najran	11	9	1	1
Jeddah	9	6	2	1
Hail	7	6	0	1
Taif	6	5	1	0
Asir	5	4	1	0
Al-Ahsaa	4	4	0	0
Eastern Region (1)	5	5	0	0
Madinah	3	3	0	0
Al-Baha	2	1	0	1
Bisha	1	1	0	0
Tabuk	1	1	0	0
Makkah	0	0	0	0
Al-Joaf	0	0	0	0
Jazan	0	0	0	0
Northern Borders	0	0	0	0
Qunfotha	0	0	0	0
Hafr Al-Batin	0	0	0	0
Qurayyat	0	0	0	0
Total	158	83	66	9

Case: Confirmed Symptomatic. U.C.: Unclassified cases

*Period: Form 3 Jan to 30 July 2016

Regions with new cases of this week are highlighted in yellow.

