

## Current Event

### Surveillance of MERS-CoV In Saudi Arabia

The Ministry of Health (MOH) is currently reviewing the performance of the surveillance system for MERS-CoV in Saudi Arabia for 2015.

## Editorial Notes

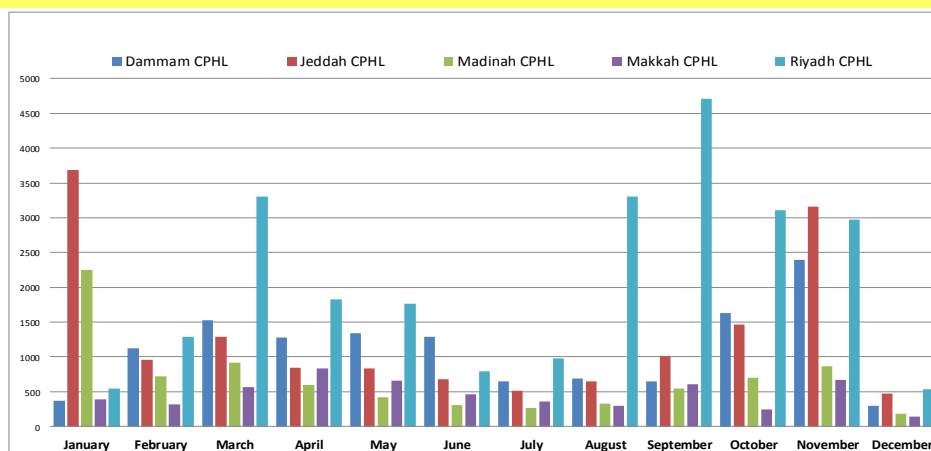
In Saudi Arabia, health facilities can be classified into three categories: MOH, non-MOH (governmental), and private. MOH is in charge of all surveillance activities related to MERS-CoV, regardless of where they occur. All health facilities in Saudi Arabia must immediately report suspected cases of MERS-CoV through the web-based surveillance system, HESN, and other appropriate channels. All suspected and laboratory-confirmed cases should be reported regardless whether or not they were symptomatic.

Some non-MOH governmental health facilities have the capacity to perform MERS-CoV PCR diagnostic testing. However, the final confirmatory diagnosis of MERS-CoV is only recognized by MOH when performed at the MOH Central Public Health Laboratories (CPHLs). A detailed case investigation form is completed for all laboratory-confirmed cases. Biological specimens are transported from the healthcare facilities to the CPHL by express mail. CPHL usually conducts two runs daily. Diagnoses are typically confirmed in about 18 hours, depending on the distance of the healthcare facility from the nearest CPHL.

MOH is aware of the need to know whether or not the MERS coronavirus is changing genetically or phenotypically or whether it is becoming more transmissible among humans. Genetic sequencing is currently done abroad in collaboration with the US CDC and some other selected global reference laboratories. Arrangements are being made to do these sophisticated laboratory tests within the Kingdom in the near future. To date no major mutation that would affect transmissibility of MERS-CoV has been detected.

Recently, the timeliness of reporting, the quality of collected surveillance data, and adherence to MOH guidelines in non-MOH governmental facilities have considerably improved. This is partially due to improved communication, participation in CCC meetings, and coordination with rapid response teams at the Regional Directorates for Health Affairs.

Total Number of Laboratory Tests for MERS-CoV Conducted by CPHLs, KSA in 2015



The positivity rate for MERS-CoV laboratory tests ranged between 0 and 59 per 1000 tests per month.

## Recent Publications:

Al-Tawfiq JA, Zumla A, Gautret P, Gray GC, Hui DS, Al-Rabeeh AA, Memish ZA. Surveillance for emerging respiratory viruses. *Lancet Infect Dis.* 2014Oct;14(10):992-1000. doi: 10.1016/S1473-3099(14)70840-0. Epub 2014 Sep 1. Review.

## MERS-CoV in KSA 2015\*

Region	Case	Primary	Secondary	U.C.
Riyadh	294	102	184	8
Al-Ahasa	56	11	41	4
Eastern Region	21	10	11	0
Jeddah	17	9	7	1
Qassim	16	10	6	0
Najran	14	9	5	0
Taif	11	8	3	0
Madinah	7	1	6	0
Asir	4	2	2	0
Tabuk	4	4	0	0
Makkah	3	3	0	0
Hail	2	1	1	0
Al-Joaf	2	2	0	0
Jazan	1	1	0	0
Northern Borders	1	1	0	0
Qunfotha	1	1	0	0
Al-Baha	0	0	0	0
Bisha	0	0	0	0
Hafr Al-Batin	0	0	0	0
Qurayyat	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>13</b>

Case: Confirmed Symptomatic. U.C. : Unclassified cases  
\*Period: Form 29 Dec 2014 to 6 Dec 2015

Cases of MERS-CoV: International Week (IW) No. 49: 30 Nov— 6 Dec 2015

Affiliation	Primary	Secondary	U.C.	Total
Ministry of Health (MOH)	98	116	4	218
Non-MOH (Governmental)	45	113	7	165
Private Hospitals	32	37	2	71