

No travel measures despite Saudi SARS-like virus toll

7 May 2013

The World Health Organisation on Tuesday said there was no need for travel restrictions in Saudi Arabia as the death toll from a SARS-like virus there rose to 11, but urged international vigilance.

"WHO does not advise special screening at ports of entry with regard to this event, nor does it recommend that any travel or trade restrictions be applied," Glenn Thomas, a spokesman for the UN health agency, told reporters in Geneva.

"Based on the current situation and available information, WHO encourages all member states to continue their surveillance for severe, [acute respiratory infections](#) and to carefully review any unusual patterns," he added.

Since the start of May, Saudi Arabia has reported to WHO seven deaths among 13 new cases of novel coronavirus, taking the number of fatalities there to 11 since last year.

Two people with the disease—known in medical jargon as nCoV-EMC—died on Friday and one was in critical condition.

"Of the 13 patients, 10 are men and three are women. The age range of the patients is from 24 to 94 years old," said Thomas.

"The Saudi Arabian government is conducting ongoing investigations into this outbreak, which is linked to one [healthcare facility](#) in Al-Ahsaa," he added, referring to the oil-rich Gulf region near Bahrain and Qatar.

Since the virus was recorded in September 2012, the total number of cases reported worldwide has hit 30, including 18 deaths, Thomas said.

While it has been deadliest in Saudi Arabia, other cases have been reported in Jordan, Germany and Britain.

It is a cousin of [Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome](#) (SARS), which triggered a scare 10 years ago when it erupted in east Asia, leaping to humans from animal hosts and eventually killing some 800 people.

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APA citation: No travel measures despite Saudi SARS-like virus toll (2013, May 7) retrieved 29 September 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-05-saudi-sars-like-virus-toll.html>

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