

Saudi man dies of MERS virus: ministry

25 August 2013

A Saudi man has died of the coronavirus MERS, bringing the kingdom's death toll from the SARS-like virus to 41, while two new cases were registered, the government said Sunday.

The 51-year-old, who had previously been diagnosed with MERS, died in Riyadh, the health ministry said on its website, adding he also suffered from cancer and other chronic diseases.

The two new cases of infection were registered in the southwestern region of Asir.

They include a man aged 31 with [chronic illnesses](#), and another, 55, who was in contact with an infected person, the ministry said.

Saudi Arabia is the country worst hit by MERS, which has killed 41 in the kingdom, out of 47 globally. Saudi authorities said 82 people have been infected, representing the majority of those who contracted the virus worldwide.

Experts are struggling to understand MERS—Middle East Respiratory Syndrome—for which there is still no vaccine and which has an extremely high [fatality rate](#) of more than 51 percent.

It is considered a cousin of the SARS virus that erupted in Asia in 2003 and infected 8,273 people, nine percent of whom died.

Like SARS, MERS is thought to have jumped from animals to humans, and it shares the former's flu-like symptoms—but differs by also causing [kidney failure](#).

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