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“Middle east respiratory syndrome... lessons learnt”

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Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) is viral respiratory illness that is new to humans. It was first reported in Saudi Arabia in 2012 and has since spread to several other countries, including the United States.

The emergence of this new coronavirus is globally recognized as an important and major challenge for all of the countries which have been affected as well as the rest of the world.

All reported cases have been linked to countries in and near the Arabian Peninsula. Either lived in the Arabian Peninsula or recently traveled from the Arabian Peninsula before they became ill or close contact with an infected person who had recently traveled from the Arabian Peninsula. The virus appears to have originated in bats.

Serological evidence shows that these viruses have infected camels for at least 20 years. As till 1st March 2015, there are 920, lab confirmed cases, with 395 deaths in KSA. Many mysteries are still unsolved, Ministry of Health KSA is also working in collaboration with WHO teams.

Exact mode of transmission is unknown. Most clusters are reported among family contacts or in a health care setting. No evidence of sustained transmission among humans. Secondary cases appear to have a milder disease than that of primary cases. Occasional possible tertiary cases reported

Infection in health care workers accounts for 13%. standard, contact, and airborne precautions are recommended for management of hospitalized patients with known/suspected MERS-CoV infection. There is evidence of a seasonal transmission pattern (March-April onwards). A rise in cases since end of January in 2015.

Biography

Fatima Noman did her MBBS in 1991 from Aga Khan University Medical College Pakistan. She did fellowship in Microbiology from College of Physician and Surgeon Pakistan. Received certification in Infection control and epidemiology CIC from CBIC USA in 2008. After 9 years service in Pakistan as head of Microbiology department and chairperson Infection Control Committee, moved to Saudi Arabia, where presently working as Director of Infection Control and Consultant Microbiologist.

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