



Department of Navy (DoN) Surveillance Advisory: Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS CoV) 20 June 2013

(with new DRSi reporting guidance)

Issue

- As of 20 June 2013, 64 laboratory confirmed cases of MERS-CoV, including 38 deaths, have been reported by the World Health Organization (WHO).
- All cases have been identified in or linked to four countries in the Arabian Peninsula and there is no evidence of extended person to person transmission.
- No special screenings at points of entry or travel restrictions are recommended by the WHO or the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- The National Center for Medical Intelligence (NCMI) reports no increased risk to US personnel. The Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center (AFHSC) is monitoring the situation and no cases have been identified in the United States or in the DoD population.
- NMCPHC medical surveillance strategy includes central analysis of electronic clinical data, local ESSENCE monitoring, and reporting of unusual conditions and clusters via Disease Reporting System internet (DRSi).

Background

MERS-CoV is a novel strain of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) like coronavirus associated with acute lower respiratory illness among patients in or with direct links to four countries in the Arabian Peninsula. To date, MERS-CoV cases have been identified in Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Additional cases identified in France, Germany, Italy, Tunisia and the United Kingdom have consisted of individuals who were transferred for care from or had recent travel to the Middle East or were close contacts of these cases.

The US Department of Health and Human Services has determined that MERS-CoV poses a significant potential for a public health emergency and the Food and Drug Administration has authorized emergency use of diagnostics for MERS-CoV detection. Multiple close-contact clusters have been observed including healthcare related outbreaks. It remains unknown what the reservoir of the virus is, how sporadic infections are acquired and how the virus spreads from person to person. The clinical spectrum and incubation period are also unknown at this time.

NMCPHC Surveillance and Reporting Guidance and MERS-CoV Resources

- Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs (OASD(HA)) memorandum dated 14 June 2013 addresses reporting of MERS-CoV cases and instructs providers to be alert to severe acute lower respiratory illness in patients with deployment/travel history to the Arabian Peninsula and neighboring countries.
 - If you suspect a case, immediately notify your Public Health Emergency Officer and your cognizant Navy Environmental Preventive Medicine Unit (NEPMU). CDC provides case definitions for surveillance and reporting at <http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/mers/case-def.html#case>.



- Navy and Marine Corps units providing patient care should report suspect ([patient under investigation](#)), probable or confirmed MERS-CoV cases via DRSi immediately by completing an outbreak report. Individual case reports should also be filed using the category 'Any other unusual condition'.
 - Include clinical presentation, travel history, hospital admission status/dates and information about contacts with other suspect cases.
 - For further information on reporting Medical Events, [click here](#) or contact the NDRS helpdesk at NDRS@nmcphc.med.navy.mil, COMM: 757-953-0954, DSN: 377-0954.
- In accordance with BUMED INST 6220.12c, naval research laboratories should immediately notify the cognizant NEPMU of suspect, probable or confirmed cases of MERS-CoV encountered while providing laboratory support to any Tricare beneficiary.
- Syndromic surveillance activities play an integral part in NMCPHC's surveillance and preparedness strategy. Navy MTFs should review their surveillance protocols to ensure they include routine ESSENCE monitoring.
- CDC MERS-CoV resources can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/> and include infection control recommendations for health care settings as well as a travel notice recommending that travelers to countries in the Arabian Peninsula protect themselves from respiratory illnesses through frequent hand washing and seek medical care if they experience symptoms of lower respiratory illness.
- For more information on the global MERS-CoV situation, see: http://www.who.int/csr/disease/coronavirus_infections/en/.
- Contact your cognizant [NEPMU](#) if you have any questions. NEPMU staff can assist with investigation support, risk assessment and obtaining guidance on laboratory testing.