

Regional Workshop on MERS-CoV and 'One Health'

Organized by



In collaboration with



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Marriott Hotel

Workshop discusses Mers

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13



(MENAFN - Gulf Times) More than 120 experts from the Mena region and beyond are taking part in a three-day workshop on the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome-Coronavirus (Mers-CoV), to discuss the impact of the disease in the region and ways to counter it.

Speaking at the opening session of the event, titled 'Regional Workshop on Mers-CoV and One Health,' director of Public Health at the Supreme Council of Health (SCH) Sheikh Dr Mohamed bin Hamad al-Thani said through collaboration, the SCH has been successful in bringing about a recognisable scientific breakthrough, with support from the World Health Organisation (WHO) and Erasmus Institute of Public Health in the Netherlands.

"We have isolated the virus from camels with their support, but more importantly, we have re-emphasised our faith in 'One Health.' It is good that 'One Health' is praised as a theme for this remarkable technical workshop," he said.

The workshop has been organised by the SCH along with the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and the Ministry of Environment (MoE), in collaboration with WHO and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). "The

workshop has managed to bring together all veterinary, health and agriculture organisations concerned and renowned professionals in one place for the first time since the emergence of Mers-CoV in 2012. This will allow for a high level of knowledge exchange to advance collective understanding of the virus and its implied challenges for public health," Sheikh Dr Mohamed noted. Nasser Rehani from the FAO said the world has witnessed more than 1,106 CoV cases since 2012. "We need more effective, fruitful and constructive collaborations to face the situation. This workshop aims to look into the matter seriously and will hopefully come up with some suggestions to meet the situation as the summer months can witness more incidence of the disease."

Dr Ghazi Yehia of the OIE highlighted the importance of the workshop, saying Mers-CoV is a serious public health threat to humans and said the longer term solutions depend on a shared commitment to conduct studies related to possible modes of transmission from animals to humans.



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Workshop discusses curbing Mers

April 28, 2015 - 1:18:59 am



[The participants of the workshop on Middle East Respiratory Syndrome in Doha yesterday.](#)

DOHA: A three-day regional workshop on Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (Mers-CoV), opened here yesterday, is discussing the latest research and findings related the disease that so far infected 1,118 people all over the world leading to 448 deaths.

The workshop is organised jointly by Ministry of Environment, the Supreme Council of Health (SCH) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in cooperation with the World Health Organisation and the World Organisation for Animal Health OIE).

The workshop, held at Doha Marriott Hotel, updates on human infections with Mers-CoV as well as the virus in animals, and overview of FAO activities on Mers-CoV.

One of the sessions of the workshop discusses “One Health” practices in relation to Mers-CoV and the current situation in the region. Another session touches on large-scale sero and virological screening for Mers-CoV in Africa and central Asia in camels.

The workshop will also discuss the virus in the Horn of Africa and current knowledge and perspectives on future activities in the region.

Speaking at the opening of the workshop, Dr Sheikh Mohamed bin Hamad Al Thani, Director of Public Health at SCH, said several aspects make the meeting a unique event. “First, it managed to bring all concerned veterinary, health, and agriculture organisations and renowned professionals together in one place for the first time since the emergence of the novel virus in 2012, allowing for high level of knowledge exchange to advance the collective understanding of the virus and its implied challenges posed on public health.”

“Second, it comes after extensive consultations and meetings at different levels in the context of animal-human interface. Despite each of these meetings managed to cast light on one of the view angles of the killing disease, this meeting recognizes the need to integrate efforts of the involved health and veterinary institutions through presenting the latest research findings on the potential role of animals in the epidemiological cycle of Mers-CoV,” he added.

Highlighting the significance of the meeting, he said the general population of Arab communities across the Arab Peninsula has high expectations of the workshop in order to find the right answers in relation to the mechanism of the virus transmission.

He added that cooperation between SCH and the Ministry of Environment has succeeded in achieving a “recognizable scientific breakthrough with a genuine support from WHO and Erasmus Institute of Public Health in Netherlands.”

Dr (Sheikh) Faleh bin Nasser Al Thani, Assistant Undersecretary for Agricultural Affairs and Fisheries at the Ministry of Environment, said that combating common diseases that can be transmitted between animals and humans is a priority for the Ministry of Environment due to the outbreak of new diseases in the recent years, 70 percent of which are common, which poses a challenge to the world that needs to be addressed.

He said the outbreak of Coronavirus in the recent years and its association with camels had a significant role in uniting efforts between the Ministry of Environment and SCH to develop a joint system of cooperation against the disease and extend the umbrella of cooperation to include other common diseases.

The workshop aims to present the latest research findings on the disease and the current knowledge in affected countries on the potential role of animal species in the epidemiological cycle of MERS. It also analyses the recent developments in diagnostic and surveillance tools to support animal investigations.

The event aims to identify the concrete steps and roadmap for coordinated actions at the sub-regional level with a view to halting the spread of the disease.

Another objective is discussing an agreeing on mechanisms for intra-regional and global cooperation in investigations, research and knowledge sharing and the role of international and regional organisations.

Apr

29

To Curb Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MersCoV)

Between 26 February and 2 March 2015, the National IHR Focal Point for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia notified WHO of 18 additional cases of Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) infection, including 5 deaths. Globally, World Health Organisation has been notified of 1060 laboratory-confirmed cases of infection with MERS-CoV, including at least 394 related deaths. The fatality rate of the patients recorded is extremely high at 30%. To date, 22 countries have had official cases of this virus.

Countries with Lab-Confirmed MERS Cases	
Countries in or near the Arabian Peninsula with Cases	Countries with Travel-associated Cases
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Saudi Arabia ❖ United Arab Emirates (UAE) ❖ Qatar ❖ Oman ❖ Jordan ❖ Kuwait ❖ Yemen ❖ Lebanon ❖ Iran 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ United Kingdom (UK) ❖ France ❖ Tunisia ❖ Italy ❖ Malaysia ❖ Philippines ❖ Greece ❖ Egypt ❖ United States of America (USA) ❖ Netherlands ❖ Algeria ❖ Austria ❖ Turkey ❖ Germany

MERS starts out a bit like a cold, but can escalate into pneumonia, organ failure, and death. Early reports described symptoms as similar to those found in SARS-CoV (severe acute respiratory syndrome) cases. However, SARS infections did not cause renal failure, unlike MERS-CoV. Sufferers of MERS-CoV will generally develop severe acute respiratory illness. Some people have reported mild respiratory illness with others showing no symptoms.



With all these information, the obvious question is “Is it a big deal?” YES! Because Saudi houses the two Holy lands in Islam; Mecca and Medina, the country receives millions of visitors every year. An estimated figure released by the Saudi authority shows that for a Hajj season (Muslim Holy pilgrimage), an average of 2.1 million Muslims from around the globe gather to perform their prayers.

Just imagine a virus outbreak to a crowd that size. If the average person goes to perform his or her prayer at the Masjid Al-Haram, chances are very high that the virus can transmit to another person without even realizing. The virus is then easily spread around the globe. A bigger problem is when an outbreak creates or combines a virus to create a new, improved, more resistant and tougher virus.

MERS will continue to spread beyond the Middle East. Since 2012, MERS has been confirmed in Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the United Kingdom, Tunisia, Malaysia and the Philippines. MERS will probably crop up in more far-flung places soon.

So what do we do?

Currently doctors provide supportive medical care to help relieve the symptoms. Supportive care means providing treatment to prevent, control or relieves complications and side effects, as well as attempting to improve the patient’s comfort and quality of life. Unfortunately, supportive care (supportive therapy) does not include treating or improving the illness/condition.

World Health Organisation encourages all medical staff to continue their observation for acute respiratory infections and to carefully review any unusual patterns. If any unusual

patterns are detected, it might take indefinite time to take any action. The process could take a long time, and might be too late for that patient.



Travel advice has been provided to reduce the risk of MERS-CoV infection amongst travelers. But, some journeys must be performed. Thus people can only be fore warned. Most will not change their travelling arrangements therefore taking the risks.

Scientists has made useful of ultra violet (UV) light – the portion of electromagnetic spectrum with wavelength between 100 and 400 nanometers. Ultraviolet germicidal irradiation (UVGI) which has the disinfection effect is proven to be able to kill numerous types of bacteria by damaging the DNA genetic material inside the bacteria.

Numerous devices are now engineered to take advantage of the UV light capabilities to kill bacteria. AtSmart Living, our UV-C lights and UVGI series are designed to disinfect and sterilize the indoor air environment <http://www.smartliving2u.com/solutions/iaq/>. The devices are tested to be effective and able to kill pathogen in a relatively short time. Most of our devices are the “plug and play” type, do it yourself (DIY) type or can be easily installed by an electrician. And the best part is; they are at affordable prices!

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