

MERS kills 10 in Saudi after surge in virus deaths

13 March 2015

Ten more people have died in Saudi Arabia from the MERS virus since last week, health ministry data showed on Friday, adding to a surge in cases over the past month. © 2015 AFP

The latest deaths occurred between March 6 and 12, mostly in the capital Riyadh, bringing to 17 the number of MERS deaths so far this month, according to the ministry.

Middle East Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) killed 30 people last month in the kingdom, which has been worst-hit by the virus.

Its symptoms can include fever, coughing and shortness of breath.

Last week the health ministry started the latest phase of a public education campaign aimed at preventing the virus from spreading.

The World Health Organization has cited the preliminary results of studies indicating that people working with camels are at increased risk of infection, with young camels particularly susceptible.

Abdul Aziz bin Saeed, who heads the centre coordinating the [health ministry](#)'s response to MERS, warned in early February that virus cases typically surge early in the year when there are more juvenile camels circulating.

More than 20 countries have been affected by the virus, with the most cases in Saudi Arabia.

A total of 950 people have been infected with MERS since it was first identified in the kingdom in 2012, and 412 of them have died.

MERS is considered a deadlier but less infectious cousin of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) virus that appeared in Asia in 2003 and killed hundreds of people, mostly in China.

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