



21 October 2021 - Last week, an EWAR training was conducted in Gaziantep, Turkey by WHO's Field Presence Office, with kind support by WHO EMRO. The EWAR training was supported by Technical Officers from WHO EMRO for two weeks and culminated in a 3-day event held in Gaziantep. The overall goal of the training was to aid and teach Country Level Operators (CLO) working across the border in conflict-torn northwest Syria, in responding to outbreaks. The training focused on teaching methods of EWAR surveillance and rapid response, capacity building of skills needed in the field, investigating outbreaks, support colleagues and communities to handle and react to outbreaks as well as teaching the practice of immediate response activities. By doing so, CLO would have the knowledge and know-how to react to an outbreak in the region and determine a local level responsibility for outbreaks, to reduce spread and mortalities. With this training WHO hope's that the CLO then will spread this information on to other partners, through workshops and information, across the border in northwest Syria.

The transnational event drew on the experience of over 20 doctors and medical workers and set about addressing disease surveillance procedures and early identification of cases and clusters for rapid containment. WHO spoke about how inadequate diagnostic capacity, insufficient contact tracing, fragmented data systems, incomplete data insights for public health responders, and suboptimal governance affect the control of an outbreak. Thus, at the training, WHO reviewed the performance of EWARS and its effectiveness and usefulness in detecting, confirming, and responding to priority diseases, as well as jointly reviewing the rapid EWAR team capacity and operation and assessing its structure within the emergency operating process. By doing so, the EWAR team were able to build frontline workers' and field team members' capacities to respond effectively and efficiently to a public health alert or outbreaks.

Outbreaks covered were as follows: Acute Bloody Diarrhea, Acute Flaccid Paralysis, Acute Jaundice Syndrome, Acute Watery Diarrhea, Immunoglobulin deficiencies, Influenza Like Illness, Leishmaniasis, Measles, Meningitis, Other Acute Diarrhea, Severe Acute Respiratory Illness, Brucellosis, SARI, Impetigo, Scabies, Chickenpox, Lice, Pertussis and Influenza.

After the EWAR training concluded all partners would return to country and be able now to confidently engage with high-risk communities, and apply knowledge of their customs and cultural norms to response efforts, as well as coordinate and communicate effectively with all relevant partners and stakeholders, including focal points for the animal-human interface. WHO would like to thank all participants and to wish them all the best in the future as they in turn ensure knowledge transfer, including short- and long-term recommendations, to other key stakeholders in northwest Syria.

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