



At the end of February 2018, a total of 2182 laboratory-confirmed cases of Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS), including 779 [MERS situation update, February 2018](#) associated deaths (case-fatality rate: 35.7%) were reported globally; the majority of these cases were reported from Saudi Arabia (1807 laboratory-confirmed cases, including 705 related deaths with a case-fatality rate of 39%).

During the month of February, 24 laboratory-confirmed cases of MERS were reported globally: 23 cases in Saudi Arabia including 5 associated deaths and one case reported in Oman. A cluster of nosocomial infection was detected on 5 March 2018 in a health-facility in Riyadh region. At least 3 secondary cases were reported in this cluster; investigation is ongoing to identify the index case as well as testing of all close contacts for identifying additional secondary cases.

The demographic and epidemiological characteristics of the cases reported in February 2018 do not show any significant difference compared with cases reported during the same period from 2012 to 2017. Owing to improved infection prevention and control practices in the hospitals, the number of hospital-acquired cases of MERS has dropped significantly in 2015, 2016 and 2017.

The age group of those aged 50–59 years continues to be the group at highest risk for acquiring infection as primary cases. For secondary cases, it is the age group of 30–39 years who are mostly at risk. The number of deaths is higher in the age group of 50–59 years for primary cases and 70–79 years for secondary cases.

[Read the latest MERS update](#)

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