

5 December - On November 14, 23 meningitis experts gathered in Khartoum to increase surveillance capacity ahead of an expected potential outbreak between December of this year and June of 2018.

(MRC), participants have learned how to [Medical Research Council WHO Collaborating Centre for Meningitis Vaccine - Gambia](#) With this new training, facilitated by the strengthen laboratory and surveillance capacity for meningitis. Since the risk of meningitis is expected to increase between December 2017 and June of 2018, this training will be extremely valuable in detecting and managing potential outbreaks of the disease.

With the training completed, some next steps include further “master trainings” at MRC in Gambia for microbiologists and molecular biologists. These master trainees will then return to share their learnings at the national and subnational levels, reaching even more people with their newly acquired expertise.

Meningitis is an inflammation of the coverings of the brain and spinal cord. Even when the disease is diagnosed early and adequate treatment is started, patients may end up with some neurological complications like deafness - or, in 4,3% of the cases worldwide, even death.

Sudan is the only country in the region located in the Africa meningitis belt. Major epidemics had been reported from Sudan in 1950–1951, 1978–1979, 1988–1989, and in 1998–1999 and 2010.

The introduction of a new vaccine in 2012 brought down the number of meningitis cases, almost completely eradicating type A meningitis. Still, risk of type C, X and W remains high as these circulate in Sudan’s neighboring countries. In addition, a recent study indicated that 18% of children in Sudan under the age of 15 are carriers of the bacteria type C. With the increased surveillance capacity, early detection and rapid response to any potential outbreaks will be much improved.

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