05 November 2022: The World Health Organization (WHO) requires US$ 10.2 million for the health-related response to the ongoing cholera outbreak in Lebanon. As of 3 November 2022, the country has reported 2421 suspected cases, including 413 confirmed cases and 18 associated deaths. The outbreak continues to spread to new communities every day as a result of contaminated water at source, community and household levels.

“Lebanon is vulnerable to cholera, and this is being aggravated by the prolonged economic situation and scarce access to clean water and proper sanitation services across the country," says Dr Abdinasir Abubakar, WHO Representative in Lebanon. “We need concerted efforts to ensure that people have access to health services, clean water and sanitation, and to educate them on how to deal with cholera if anyone becomes infected.”

The health care system in Lebanon is already strained due to the current economic and social crises, and the cholera outbreak may overwhelm the already fragile health system in the country. There are many challenges in responding to the cholera outbreak, and WHO and other partners are making extra efforts to overcome these in order to control the outbreak in a timely manner. WHO’s priority is to limit the spread of the cholera outbreak, while minimizing the morbidity and mortality associated with cholera through good quality health care.

The focus of WHO’s response to the cholera outbreak is to:

• ensure efficient and effective multisectoral national and subnational coordination mechanisms to manage the cholera outbreak response

• enhance the timely epidemiological detection, confirmation and investigation of cholera

• strengthen laboratory capacity for rapid diagnosis

• increase access to treatment for suspected cholera patients and strengthen capacity to manage cases at different stages of infection

• ensure access to vaccination, especially for high-risk populations

• support lifesaving wash prevention and response measures

• work on procurement and delivery of essential supplies and equipment

• strengthen risk communication and community engagement and provide key messages to vulnerable communities on prevention.

Since the first case was detected, WHO has been effectively working the Ministry of Public Health and its partners to reduce avoidable morbidity and mortality, contain transmission of the disease in affected areas and mitigate the risk that the outbreak spreads to other areas.

Related links

WHO warns of deadly cholera outbreak in Lebanon as cases increase

WHO Lebanon: AWD/cholera response plan

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