



17 June 2020 - Oman has launched some of the most powerful technological solutions deployed to date in the Middle East to track the movement and spread of COVID-19 and ensure patient compliance with isolation measures, in an effort to contain the disease in the country.

Named Tarassud Plus, the system is a combination of a mobile application using artificial intelligence, with enhanced features that include up-to-date COVID-19 statistics, guidelines and best practices to prevent the spread of infection.

The application also enables access to medical hotlines and support staff so that patients can discuss their symptoms and be directed to facilities where they can access care. Once patients are diagnosed, a medical tracking bracelet connected to the application ensures that they stay at home for the duration of their quarantine or isolation.

“As nations around the world emerge from lockdowns, we must remain vigilant,” said Dr Jaffar Hussain, acting WHO representative to Oman. “Only through widespread testing, contact tracing, and surveillance of the virus can we ensure that infection curves stay flat and lives are saved.”

The application is available in Arabic, English, Hindi, Bengali and Urdu, in an effort to cater to both citizens and residents in Oman. It has been downloaded tens of thousands of times.

“Information is crucial if we are to effectively fight the coronavirus, and this kind of epidemiological data will help us better understand how it spreads, while limiting new infections,” said Dr Adil Al Wahaibi, Director of Surveillance in Oman’s Ministry of Health.

As of 16 June, Oman has reported 25 269 cases of COVID-19 and 114 deaths. A total of 11 089 people have recovered.

With an increasing number of cases reported, the artificial intelligence used in the app helps public health professionals risk-stratify suspected cases and attend to the most crucial ones.

The platform can be used to combat misinformation about the spread of the virus, and, if it is more widely distributed, can help limit future outbreaks through early detection of symptoms and effective contact tracing. Officials say it may be used in the future to guarantee that individuals who test positive for the coronavirus cannot access crowded places such as malls and mosques.

The capital Muscat has established a round-the-clock Center of Operation Management to sift through COVID-19 data and conduct epidemiological surveillance to track the spread of the virus effectively.

“The wealth of information gleaned from effective surveillance, monitoring and contact tracing will ensure that Oman is also ready for any future outbreaks to protect the wider population,” said Dr Seif Al Abri, Director General of Communicable Disease and Disease Surveillance, in Oman’s Ministry of Health.

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