MERS-CoV: efforts to unravel the mystery continued throughout 2013

In 2013, the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean continued its efforts to improve public health preparedness to effectively respond to the outbreak caused by MERS-CoV which has killed over half of the cases reported so far. Although most cases confirmed so far in the Region have been sporadic with an unknown source of infection, human-to-human transmission has been reported in health care and household settings. However, as the source of infection and mode of disease transmission remained largely unknown, the collaborative efforts of the Regional Office continued with health authorities of affected countries and other international health agencies resulting in a steady increase in knowledge on the evolution of this novel virus, as well as improved surveillance for early detection, prevention and rapid control of any sign that the virus was evolving into the cause of an another international public health emergency.

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