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Read the latest MERS update At the end of February 2017, a total of 1916 laboratory-confirmed cases of Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV), including 702 deaths (case–fatality rate: 36.6%) were reported globally. Of these, Saudi Arabia reported a total of 1561 laboratory-confirmed cases, including 633 deaths (case–fatality rate: 40.6%).

- During the months of January and February 2017, an increase in the number of primary cases was observed in Saudi Arabia (18 primary cases) compared to the previous 2 months (17 primary cases), as well as during the same period in 2016 (13 primary cases). In January 2017, a total of 18 laboratory-confirmed cases, including 6 deaths (case–fatality rate: 33.3%) were reported, while in February a total of 12 laboratory-confirmed cases, including 3 deaths were reported from Saudi Arabia.
- No hospital outbreak was reported during the first 2 months of 2017. Despite this increase in primary cases, no significant increase in secondary cases or any difference in demographic or epidemiological characteristics of the cases were observed. The demographic and epidemiological characteristics of the cases reported in 2017 do not show any significant difference compared with cases reported during the same period from 2012 to 2016.
- The age group of those aged 50–59 years continues to be the group at highest risk for acquiring infection as primary cases for both males and females. However, the females in the age group of 20–29 and 30–39 are acquiring MERS infection in higher numbers when compared to males in the same age group.

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Monday 29th of April 2024 05:59:05 AM