A total of 508 laboratory-confirmed cases of Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) including 209 deaths (case-fatality rate: 41%) were reported from the countries of WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region between 01 January and 30 September 2015. The countries reporting cases of MERS from the region in 2015 include Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. In the month of August, a sudden surge in the number of cases were reported from Saudi Arabia (134 cases, including 47 deaths).

Compared to 2014, the age and epidemiological characteristics of MERS cases reported in 2015 do not show any significant difference; the age group of 50–59 years continue to be the main risk group for acquiring infection for primary cases, while the risk group for secondary cases is observed to be 30–39 years. The majority of deaths among the secondary cases have been seen to have occurred in the age group of 50–59 and 70–79 years.

Hospital outbreaks of MERS remain the major public health concern. A number of small to medium size hospital outbreaks from MERS have been reported from the countries in the region since January 2015.