

Cholera Task Force-IRAQ

Update on Current Cholera Outbreak in Iraq. SITREP – Situation Report – N° 21

03.12.2015 (Epi Week 49)

The cholera outbreak in Iraq is slowly waning down, and very few confirmed cases were reported from the affected districts or governorates through their provincial reference laboratories since the last update. Refer to the attached epidemic curves below for further information.

Since the first laboratory-confirmed case of cholera in Iraq was notified officially to World Health Organization (WHO) on 15 September 2015 in Alshamiya District in Diwaniya Governorate. Ministry of Health (MoH) collected 119,983 stool samples for suspected cholera since the beginning of the outbreak.

The cumulative laboratory confirmed cholera cases in provincial reference laboratory stands 4915 with only two deaths recorded as of 26 November 2015. Most of the confirmed cases at the provincial level were retested at the central reference laboratory in Baghdad for quality control, and 2872 cases tested positive again for *Vibrio cholerae* 01 Inaba. Currently, 16 out of the 19 governorates in Iraq reported laboratory-confirmed cases. The central public health laboratory identified that the causative strain of this outbreak was *Vibrio cholerae* 01 Inaba. The strain has been found to be sensitive to commonly used antibiotics including tetracycline, ciprofloxacin, erythromycin, etc. Sixteen vibrio cholera isolates have been sent to the Pasteur Institute in France for genotyping and other advanced testings.

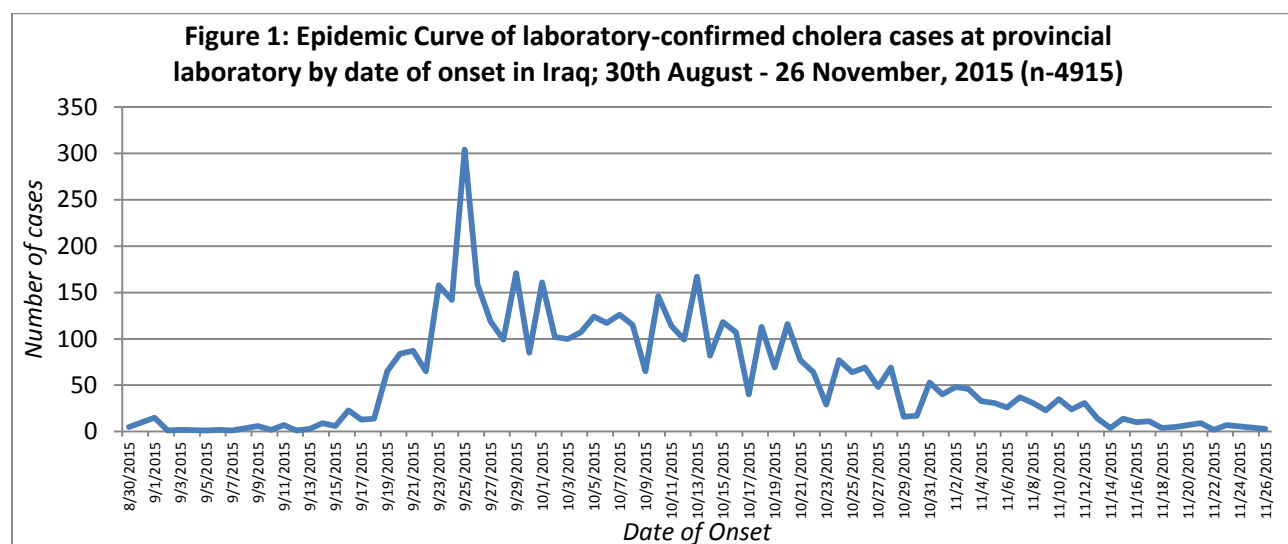


Figure 1: Epidemic Curve of laboratory-confirmed cholera cases at provincial laboratory by date of onset in Iraq; 30th August - 26 November, 2015

Nearly ten districts within Baghdad, Babylon, Diwaniya and Muthana governorates reported over 75% of all laboratory-confirmed cholera cases, and most of these districts are located along the Euphrates and Tigris rivers.

A reference to the new line list received from the Ministry of Health (MoH), only fifty-one new cases were confirmed in provincial laboratories between 20 - 26 November 2015. Over 80% of the new cases were reported from three districts in Baghdad, Baladiat, Sadder City and Al-Resafa in particular.

Please note, we did not received the updated weekly surveillance reported from the MoH since week 45, and it is not possible to compare the acute diarrheal cases tested for cholera and confirmed cases.

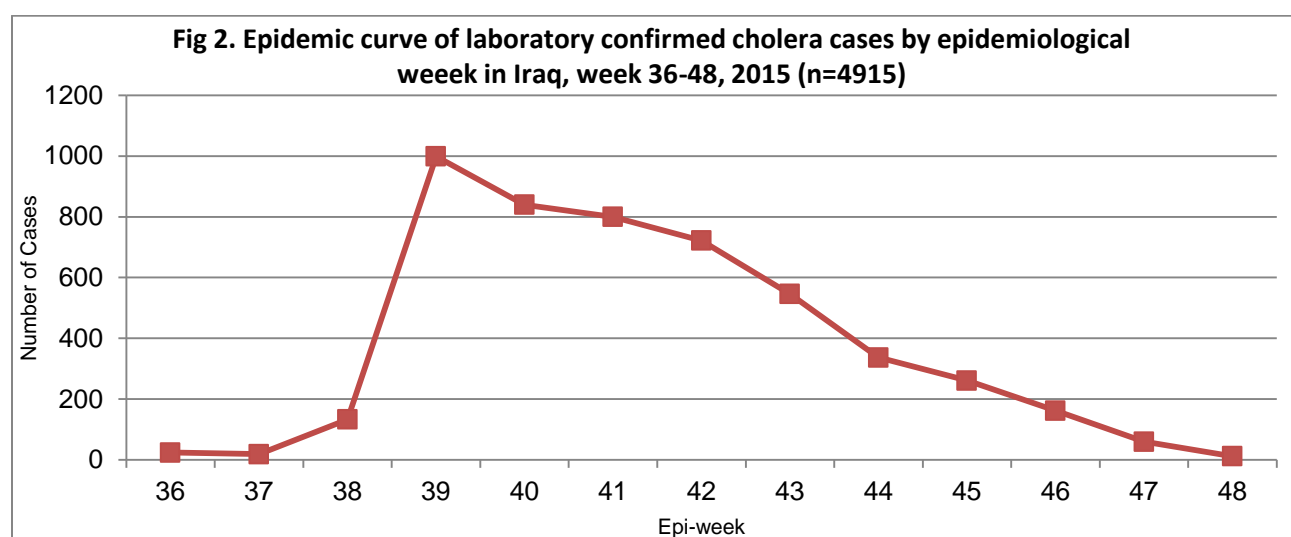


Figure 2: Total cholera confirmed cases at Provincial laboratories in 16 governorates and reconfirmed cholera cases at Central Public Health Laboratory in Baghdad between weeks of 36-48.

The Arbaenia religious gathering has been ongoing since the last week of November, and it will end this week. There was no major health event reported, including cholera during this major pilgrimage. It has been reported that over 10 million people from all over the world had converged in Karbala as part of Arbaenia on the 2 of December 2015 then to Najaf. WHO has been supporting the health authorities in scaling up the surveillance, provision of medical supplies, and health education campaigns.

The preparation of the second round of the Oral Cholera Vaccine (OCV) campaign is going well, and it is planned 7-10 December 2015 in 62 IDP and refugee camps. Also the post-campaign evaluation or coverage survey will be conducted after the completion of the Round 2 of the OCV campaign in selected sites, and CDC-Atlanta is providing technical support.