

Baghdad, Iraq, 10 June 2020 – The World Health Organization (WHO) in Iraq clarifies the statement made regarding the claim that COVID asymptomatic transmission is very rare.

The claim made on 8 June was referring to a subset of studies and data shared by some Member States, on detailed cluster investigations and contact tracing activities. In those studies, where asymptomatic cases were followed, it was “very rare” to find secondary transmission.

COVID-19 is caused by a new virus and we are still learning about the disease every day. It is important to stress that transmission is driven by symptomatic patients, and most recommendations for social measures are based on transmission from symptomatic patients, including mildly symptomatic cases who are not easy to identify.

The current body of evidence available worldwide is in support of, and testifies to the correctness and effectiveness of the response measures taken by the Ministry of Health, in coordination with WHO and that finding, isolating, testing every case, and tracing and quarantining every contact remains the cornerstone of the containment operation in the country.

“Measures taken by the health authorities in Iraq were applied in countries around the globe and are critical to observe with the recent flareup in reported cases,” said Dr Adham R. Ismail, WHO Representative in Iraq.

“Measures such as social distancing; suspension of mass gatherings; movement restrictions; and the closure of institutions like schools, workplaces, and restaurants are still necessary to contain the disease transmission. The pandemic can only be controlled through isolation, rapid testing, treatment, and contact tracing,” Dr Ismail added.

WHO in Iraq calls upon national health authorities to maintain early isolation of all cases and admit positive patients who have mild disease or do not require hospitalization to temporary isolation facilities with infection prevention and control measures in place.

WHO in Iraq will continue to work with national health authorities, partners, and local communities to ensure the strict adherence to infection prevention and control protocols.

“Individuals and communities must be updated regularly on the evolution of the outbreak and be given the information they need to protect themselves and their families,” Dr. Ismail concluded

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