

**The latest Ministry of Health and Environment statistics show that communicable diseases account for 17% of all deaths in Iraq and are the second largest cause of mortality and morbidity in the country.**



The World Health Organization (WHO) provides technical and logistical support to the Ministry to control many communicable diseases, including tuberculosis (TB), hepatitis, HIV/AIDS and neglected tropical diseases, and to tackle antimicrobial resistance, collect communicable disease surveillance data and help ensure adequate response to outbreaks.

Support focuses mainly on capacity-building, integrating responses at central and governorate levels, and developing technical guidance and guidelines. WHO also supports the Ministry's analysis of data to evaluate the impact of interventions to control common communicable diseases and improve surveillance.

## **Tuberculosis**

The Ministry of Health estimates TB prevalence to be 42 new cases per 100 000 population (2017). Deaths due to TB are estimated at 1100 annually, with a mortality rate of 2.9 per 100 000. In 2018, 7104 cases of TB were detected and reported and 75 cases of multidrug-resistant TB were confirmed.

WHO and the Ministry of Health developed national multidrug-resistant TB guidelines. Twenty two staff were trained in the clinical and operational management of drug-resistant TB patients and to manage a range of clinical, diagnostic and therapeutic issues related to drug-resistant TB.

## **Hepatitis**

A total of 1926 cases of hepatitis B and 594 of hepatitis C were recorded in 2017.

National statistics on hepatitis are limited. WHO is working with the hepatitis control programme to train health care staff and provide technical support and advocacy material to raise awareness about hepatitis on a regular basis.

## **HIV/AIDS**

HIV prevalence in Iraq is less than 1% although the number of cases is expected to increase, especially in conflict-affected areas. In 2017, 86 people were enrolled in HIV care.

In 2018, WHO supported the Ministry of Health's procurement of antiretroviral drugs for the treatment of HIV/AIDS patients and conducted an evaluation of the national AIDS programme to identify gaps and recommend ways to scale up the detection of cases and improve service delivery for people living with HIV/AIDS.

## **Malaria**

There is no local transmission of malaria in Iraq. Though risk exists in southern and central governorates, from the Tigris-Euphrates river basin to the border with Islamic Republic of Iran. In 2017, all 9 malaria cases reported in Iraq were imported.

To maintain Iraq's malaria-free status WHO trained 25 malaria focal points in the prevention, management and control of the disease.

## **Antimicrobial resistance**

As a result of the misuse and overuse of antibiotics antimicrobial resistance has become a serious global public health challenge. Iraq has seen an increase in the number of infections due to resistant bacteria and a commensurate reduction in successful treatments for managing such infections. There are, however, no available data on antimicrobial resistance in Iraq.

With technical support from WHO, the Ministry of Health developed a national action plan on antimicrobial resistance for Iraq and 50 health officials were trained in surveillance using the global antimicrobial resistance surveillance system (GLASS) platform.

## **Neglected tropical diseases**

The Ministry of Health has developed an integrated vector management and control plan to strengthen prevention and control of neglected tropical diseases in the country, the most prevalent of which are leishmaniasis, soil-transmitted helminthiasis and rabies.

## **Surveillance**

Public health surveillance provides national health authorities with accurate and timely data to facilitate the prevention and control of disease outbreaks and ensure an adequate response to any public health incident. To build the capacity of the communicable disease surveillance programme, WHO has trained 52 health workers from different health districts in the use of electronic surveillance software to generate reports and monitor trends.

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