

23 June 2016 – Recently, some media reports have misinterpreted and erroneously reported details about Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, published on the WHO “Disease outbreak news” portal on 19 June 2016.

In relation to this, WHO would like to state the following in reference to these reports:

Disease outbreak news states the facts of an event with limited interpretation and without judgement. The source of the information of disease outbreak news is the ministry of health of the country in which the event took place.

In this particular event, the patient was not misdiagnosed as the presenting symptoms of the patient were different than what is usually seen in a patient with MERS-CoV. Subsequently, the patient developed symptoms consistent with MERS-CoV and all the recommended procedures were followed by the hospital.

As soon as the diagnosis was confirmed, the Ministry of Health of Saudi Arabia implemented all necessary public health control measures to prevent any further spread of the disease in the hospital.

Dr Ala Alwan, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean said, “The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has scaled up and continued to improve its response to prevent and early detect MERS cases in the community and control any hospital outbreak. MERS-CoV continues to cause human-to-human transmission and global vigilance should never be lowered.”

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