

## **MERS Patient Confirmed in ROK [8.Sep.2018]**

Contact: Moon Sang-jun, Division of Public Health Preparedness and Response  
(043-719-9061, untohim@korea.kr)

□ The Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (KCDC) confirmed that a 61-year old male in the Republic of Korea (ROK) tested positive for Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). The individual returned to ROK after having traveled to Kuwait with a stopover in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Upon showing symptoms after arrival, the patient was treated as a suspected MERS patient and promptly transported to a nationally designated isolation ward for further confirmation testing. Test results returned positive for MERS infection, initiating epidemiological investigation and rapid government response.

\* The confirmed patient was on Emirates flights EK860 from Kuwait to UAE (Sept. 6 22:35 - Sept. 7 1:10) and EK322 from UAE to ROK (Sept. 7 3:47 - 16:51)

○ The confirmed patient experienced symptoms of diarrhea during his stay in Kuwait (Aug. 16 - Sept. 6) and visited a local medical facility on Aug. 28. Upon returning to ROK, the patient went straight from Incheon International Airport to the emergency room at Samsung Medical Center.

- The patient was immediately triaged and isolated upon arriving at Samsung Medical Center, and tests showed signs of fever, sputum, and pneumonia. The patient was reported as a suspected MERS case and was promptly transported to a nationally designated isolation ward, where samples were collected and sent to the Seoul Research Institute of Public Health and Environment for testing, the results of which returned positive for MERS.

○ Following reports of a suspected MERS case, KCDC and the Seoul Metropolitan Government closely collaborated with the Incheon International Airport Quarantine Station to track contacts of the patient, including patients who traveled on the same plane. Also, following confirmation of MERS infection, a rapid response team\* was dispatched on-site to conduct extensive epidemiological investigation on the patient.

\* Consisting of 1 KCDC Division Director, 4 epidemiological intelligence officers, and administrative staff

○ Currently, KCDC and the Seoul Metropolitan Government are working with local government agencies to track and determine the number of potential contacts with the confirmed patient.

- The following 20 close contacts have been confirmed: 1 quarantine officer, 1 immigration office, 3 flight attendants, 10 airline passengers, 4 medical professionals at Samsung Medical Center, and 1 family member. This number is subject to change following further epidemiological investigations.

- Information on confirmed contacts has been sent to local public health centers, and these individuals have been advised accordingly to conduct self-isolation and other necessary precautions.

o KCDC is also working closely with local government agencies and private experts to further strengthen and expand upon rapid response team efforts on-site, including plans to conduct additional virus testing and analysis of collected patient samples.

\* Additional information on the current situation will be provided upon further epidemiological investigation to ensure rapid, accurate, and transparent communication with the public.