

Position Paper for EAMUNC 2015

Committee: WHO

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Topic: Countermeasures to the spread of MERS

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Middle East Respiratory Syndrome, a strain of coronavirus that causes a viral respiratory illness, was first spotted in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in September, 2012. In accordance with up-to-date data, several countries have reported laboratory-confirmed cases of MERS-CoV infections, including China, the Republic of Korea and Saudi Arabia. The current scientific evidence, however, suggest that the virus is circulating in dromedary camels but the route of transmission of virus from camels to humans remain unknown although direct and indirect contact with camels is presumed to a risk factor for transmission of virus in humans.

France, undoubtedly one of the most active members in WHO, recommends increasing efforts to raise awareness of MERS among travellers going to or from outbreaking countries. Healthcare workers in all countries should maintain a high level of vigilance for the possibility of MERS-CoV outbreak, especially among travellers or migrant workers returning from affected regions or countries should be ensured with an adequate surveillance for MERS-CoV according to WHO guidelines[1], along with proper infection prevention and control procedures in healthcare facilities.

With the evaluation of current situation, France will take immediate action that travel or trade restrictions, including special screening at points of entry might possibly be implemented to ensure the safety of French residences. Further actions will be taken in case any laboratory-confirmed cases is spotted in the region of Western or Central Europe, providing supportive and all-round health care for all residences in case the infection of MERS outbreaks in France. The Social Affairs, Health and Women's Rights Department of France has been in close corporation with WHO and the European Regional Office of which to monitor the current situation of MERS around the globe.

As a well-developed country in Europe, France adopts a bold and broad attitude to provide medical and financial aid for MERS-affecting countries. In accordance with the 2012 Financial Report of WHO, France is one of the largest annual assessed contributions from

member states, at a high financing partnership of 31 million dollars[2]. Such that, France will continuously provide expert medical aid team to developing countries encountering MERS-CoV, especially among developing countries and middle east countries to prevent the further transmission of MERS. On the other hand, the authorities of Social Affairs, Health and Women's Rights have established a special sector in the department to make follow up actions in case to respond without overdue to the worldwide MERS-CoV emergencies.

Looking back on earlier outbreaks of Ebola, SARS and MERS-CoV, French experts believes that patterns can be found to predict the future evolution of the virus. Thus, France suggests all member states to be in close contact with WHO and immediately report any suspicious or probable cases together with the information of exposure, testing and clinical course, enabling expert teams to rapidly respond and involve into the issue. The Director-General of WHO has convened an Emergency Committee under the International Health Regulations[3] to advise her as to whether this event constitutes a Public Health Emergency of International Concern[4] and on the public health measures that should be taken. France encourages all Member States to enhance their surveillance for severe acute respiratory infections and to carefully review any unusual patterns of SARI or pneumonia cases. Though in the current stage, WHO suggests no restrictions among trade or travel activities, France suggests member states to formulate precaution protocols in case a emergency outbreak of MERS takes place.

Together with affected countries and international technical partners and networks, France is coordinating the global health response to MERS[5], including: the provision of updated information on the situation; conducting risk assessments and joint investigations with international organisations and local authorities; convening scientific meetings; and corporately developing guidance and training for health authorities and technical health agencies on interim surveillance recommendations, laboratory testing of cases, infection prevention and control, and clinical management.

France believes that the battle against disease needs the corporation of all member states. No matter the obstacles ahead, France will consistently and generously help all potential states enduring MERS until the full control of MERS-CoV outbreaks. France hopes all countries can join together hand in hand to solve the difficulties lying ahead on our way of human beings

Reference

- [1] WHO guidelines for investigation of cases of human infection with Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) (July 2013)
- [2] Assessed Contributions payable by Member States and Associate Members – 2012–2013" (PDF). WHO. Retrieved 26 (March 2012).
- [3] International Health Regulations Second edition World Health Organisation (2005)
- [4] IHR Procedures concerning public health emergencies of international concern (PHEIC) (2005 Second Edition)
- [5] Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) (June 2015)

Related Links

http://www.wpro.who.int/outbreaks_emergencies/wpro_coronavirus/en/
<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/mers-cov/en/>
<http://www.who.int/countries/fra/en/>
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