

Saudi declares new death from MERS virus

24 June 2013

A Saudi man has died from the MERS virus, bringing the kingdom's death toll from the SARS-like infection to 34, the ministry of health said on Monday.

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The ministry said on its website that new cases had also been recorded, especially in Eastern Province where most of the infections have occurred.

The ministry said it had now recorded 66 cases of infection from the coronavirus MERS in the kingdom since the disease erupted last year. It said 34 of those who contracted the disease had died.

The [World Health Organisation](#) said on June 17 that 64 laboratory-confirmed cases of the disease, dubbed Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), had surfaced worldwide to date, including 38 deaths.

The virus is a member of the coronavirus family, which includes the pathogen that causes [Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome](#) (SARS).

SARS sparked global panic in 2003 after it jumped to humans from animals in Asia and killed some 800 people.

Like SARS, MERS appears to cause a [lung infection](#), with patients suffering from fever, coughing and breathing difficulties. But it differs in that it also causes rapid [kidney failure](#).

While most of the cases have been concentrated in Saudi Arabia, the MERS virus has also spread to neighbouring Jordan, Qatar and the [United Arab Emirates](#).

Cases have also been found in France, Germany, Italy, Tunisia and Britain, although most of these patients had been transferred for care from the Middle East or had travelled to the Middle East and become ill after they returned, the WHO said.

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