

Beat: Health

4 more die from novel coronavirus in Saudi Arabia

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USPA News - Four more people in Saudi Arabia have died from the new novel coronavirus (nCoV) which emerged in the Middle East last year, health officials confirmed on Monday, raising the overall death toll from the SARS-like virus to nearly 40. The Ministry of Health in Saudi Arabia said four people whose infections had previously been confirmed by laboratory tests had died from the illness. It also announced three additional laboratory-confirmed cases, including a 42-year-old man from the kingdom's eastern region, a 63-year-old woman from Riyadh and a 2-year-old child from Jeddah.

The new coronavirus first emerged in the Middle East last year and is now known to have infected at least 64 people, including 38 people who died from the illness. The disease appeared at a health care facility in Saudi Arabia's eastern province of Ahsaa in May and infected at least fifteen patients, more than a month after the last case of the virus had been reported. Later in May, France confirmed the country's first case of the novel coronavirus in a patient who recently traveled to Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, where another case had been reported in March. The victim eventually died, and a second person who shared a hospital room in Valenciennes with the first patient remains in a critical condition with the same illness. Experts are still unsure how people become infected, whether it is from animals, from contaminated surfaces, or from other people. And although there is no evidence yet of continuous human-to-human transmission, the World Health Organization (WHO) has said it appears likely that the virus is able to pass from person-to-person when there is close contact. WHO Director-General Margaret Chan sounded the alarm over the virus - which is also known as the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) - during her closing remarks at the 66th World Health Assembly late last month, warning that the virus "poses a threat to the entire world" and urging the international community to come together to combat the threat. "The novel coronavirus is not a problem that any single affected country can keep to itself or manage all by itself. The novel coronavirus is a threat to the entire world," Chan said. "Through WHO and the IHR, we need to bring together the assets of the entire world in order to adequately address this threat. We need more information, and we need it quickly, urgently."

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