

Current major event

Emerging and Dangerous Pathogens Laboratory Network in WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region

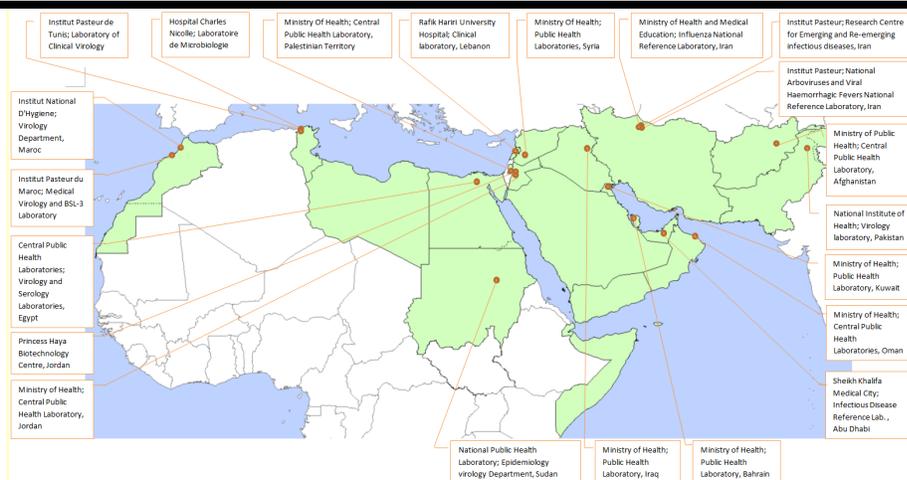
The WHO's Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (EMRO) has progressed towards establishing an Emerging and Dangerous Pathogens Laboratory Network (EDPLN). The main purpose of the network is to enhance laboratory diagnostic capacity of Regional laboratories and to timely respond to health emergencies in the Region.

Editorial note

Countries in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) experience frequent epidemics from Emerging and Dangerous Pathogens (EDP) including MERS-CoV, dengue fever, yellow fever, Rift Valley fever (RVF), Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever (CCHF), chikungunya, and cholera. Early confirmation of these diseases requires specialized laboratories with appropriate biosafety levels, accurate detection and diagnosis capacities, and particularly a referral network of laboratories in provision of advanced diagnostic services. Currently, laboratory diagnostic capacities for EDPs of public health laboratories in the Region are substantially limited.

WHO/EMRO organized a two-day Regional consultative meeting on EDPLN envisaging to establish a high security laboratories network in the Region during the period from 22-23 August 2017. This network aims: i) to enhance laboratory diagnostic capacities as well as provide advanced diagnostic services for EDPs in both preparedness and response phases of emergency management; ii) to strengthen connection, communication and coordination among laboratories nationally and internationally; and iii) to facilitate knowledge transfer and information sharing among laboratories in the Region as well as in other WHO regions.

During this consultative meeting held in the Regional Office, a total of 43 delegates from 18 countries in the Region unanimously agreed to establish the re-



Terms of Reference of EDPLN

1. Improve rapid and early diagnosis, identification and characterization, of viral, bacterial and parasitological EDP outbreaks;
2. Improve timely and rapid response to outbreaks of EDPs;
3. Define, prioritize and further the research and development agenda (diagnostics, vaccine and therapeutics) through regional collaboration
4. Improve biosafety and biosecurity practices; and
5. Facilitate knowledge transfer and information sharing.

gional EDPLN with a definitive terms of reference (*Please see the box above*).

Before establishing the network, a self assessment of the laboratory capacities for detection and diagnosis of EDPs was done in 21 laboratories in the Region (*Please see above*). Based on findings of this self-assessment, the network and its terms of reference was finalized in the regional meeting.

As a follow up to the establishment of this network, the member countries would now identify list of laboratories in health and other related sectors such as animal sector and establish a national pool of laboratory experts, and map roles of laboratories in outbreak response.

In support of the network, the WHO Regional Office will now support the countries to build their capacity for diagnosis and detection of EDPs using a phased programme. The Regional Office will also identify research agenda for the Region, together with putting in consideration the ethical, biosafety and biosecurity issues.

Update on outbreaks in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

MERS-CoV in Saudi Arabia; **Cholera** in Somalia; **Cholera** in Yemen; **Chikungunya** in Pakistan.

Current public health events of international concern [cumulative N° of cases (deaths), CFR %]

Avian Influenza: 2006-2017

Egypt (A/H5N1)	[359 (122), 34%]
Egypt (A/H9N2)	[3 (0)]

Chikungunya: 2016-2017

Pakistan	[7,977 (0)]
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MERS-CoV: 2012-2017

Saudi Arabia	[1,722 (672), 39%]
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Cholera: 2016-2017

Somalia	[77,783 (1,159), 1.49%]
Yemen	[791,551 (2,142), 0.27%]

Lassa Fever: 2017

Nigeria	[853 (118), 13.8%]
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Avian Influenza A (H7N9): 2013-2017

China	[1,557 (605), 38.9%]
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Dengue fever: 2017

Côte d'Ivoire	[1231 (2), 0.2%]
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Wild poliovirus: 2017

Pakistan	[5 (0)]
Afghanistan	[6 (0)]

Zika Virus Infection: 2015-2017

84 countries and territories have reported transmission so far.