

Five isolated in Danish hospital for SARS-like symptoms

September 26 2012

Five people have been isolated in a hospital in Denmark with symptoms of a new viral respiratory illness from the same family as the deadly SARS virus, the hospital said on Wednesday.

"We have sent samples from the five for testing and hope to get the results this afternoon," chief physician Svend Stenvang Petersen of Odense University Hospital told AFP.

"The five have a fever, coughing and influenza-like symptoms," he added.

Petersen said those admitted were a family of four where the father had been to Saudi Arabia, and an unrelated person who had been to Qatar. Two of those with symptoms were under the age of five.

"We have put them in isolation because we don't know how the virus spreads. So just as with bird and [swine flu](#) we have admitted them and isolated them so that we prevent the spread to others," Petersen said.

"We do not have any medicine that works against this virus."

The five contacted their doctors following a Danish health authority advisory on Monday recommending that those who had travelled to Qatar and Saudi Arabia seek medical help if they experienced a fever, coughing, shortness of breath and difficulty breathing.

The [new virus](#), which is in the same family as the [Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome](#) (SARS) virus, was recently identified by the British [Health Protection Agency](#) in a Qatari man transferred to London from Qatar.

A Saudi national died earlier this year from a virtually identical virus, the [World Health Organisation](#) has said.

The WHO confirmed in a global alert on Monday that the new virus was in the coronavirus family which causes the common cold but can also include more severe illnesses including SARS.

SARS swept out of China in 2003, killing more than 800 people worldwide.

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