

Three new cases of SARS-like virus in Saudi Arabia

May 3 2013

Three new cases of a new SARS-like virus have been detected in Saudi Arabia, the World Health Organisation reported Friday.

"The Ministry of Health in Saudi Arabia has informed WHO of an additional three laboratory confirmed cases of infection with the novel coronavirus (nCoV)," the UN body said in a statement.

"They are currently in [critical condition](#)," it added.

The organisation said the latest report brought to 27 the global total of laboratory confirmed cases, including 16 deaths.

The virus was first detected in mid-2012 and is a cousin of [Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome](#) (SARS), which triggered a scare 10 years ago when it erupted in east Asia, leaping to humans from animal hosts.

hCoV-EMC stands for human coronavirus-Erasmus Medical Centre, after the Dutch health institution that identified it.

The mysterious killer virus has been deadliest in [Saudi Arabia](#) and the other cases were reported in Jordan, Germany and Britain.

Researchers believe the virus can be transmitted from human to human, although such occurrences appear to be uncommon.

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