

UAE announces first case of MERS-virus infection

July 12 2013

Health authorities in the UAE have announced that an 82-year-old man has been diagnosed with the MERS coronavirus infection, the first case to be recorded in the Gulf state.

The Emirati citizen who contracted the SARS-like virus suffers from cancer and is being treated in hospital in the capital, Abu Dhabi health authority said in a statement carried by WAM state news agency late Thursday.

The authority said that this was the first case to be diagnosed in the United Arab Emirates.

In May, France said a 65-year-old man was in hospital after being diagnosed with the coronavirus after a holiday in Dubai. But the UAE health ministry said at the time no cases of the virus had been recorded in the country.

Experts are struggling to understand MERS, or Middle East Respiratory Syndrome, which has mostly affected neighbouring Saudi Arabia where 65 cases have been detected, including 38 fatalities.

The World Health Organisation announced last week that it had convened emergency talks on the MERS virus.

Concerns have been expressed about the potential impact of October's hajj pilgrimage, when millions of Muslims from around the globe head

to and from Saudi Arabia.

The WHO has not recommended any MERS-related travel restrictions, but says countries should monitor unusual respiratory infection patterns.

The first recorded MERS death was in June last year in Saudi Arabia.

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](#).

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