

Qatar announces fourth MERS death

November 22 2013

An expatriate living in Qatar has died of MERS, bringing to four the number of deaths in the Gulf state from the coronavirus, health authorities said on Friday.

The 48-year-old had other pre-existing health problems, Qatar's Supreme Council of Health in a statement.

It was the second death reported in Qatar this week. On Tuesday the emirate reported the death of a 61-year-old expatriate.

Two other deaths were reported in early September.

In addition, a Qatari man died in a London hospital in late June after contracting the virus.

The World Health Organisation said on Wednesday that it has been notified of 155 laboratory-confirmed cases of the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus worldwide so far, including 64 deaths, most of them in Qatar's larger neighbour Saudi Arabia.

Experts are struggling to understand the disease, for which there is no vaccine.

It is considered a deadlier but less-transmissible cousin of the SARS virus that erupted in Asia in 2003 and infected 8,273 people, nine percent of whom died.

Like Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, MERS appears to cause a lung infection, with patients suffering from a temperature, coughing and breathing difficulties.

But it differs in that it also causes rapid kidney failure, and the extremely high death rate has caused serious concern.

In August, researchers pointed to Arabian camels as possible hosts of the virus.

And the Saudi government said on November 11 that a camel in the kingdom had tested positive for MERS, the first case of an animal infected with the [coronavirus](#).

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