

Two new MERS deaths bring Saudi toll to 107

April 30 2014

Saudi health authorities announced Wednesday two new deaths from the MERS coronavirus in the kingdom, where 16 more infections were also detected.

A 41-year-old man in the northwestern city of Tabuk and an 88-year-old in Riyadh died of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome, bringing to 107 the total deaths since the disease appeared in the kingdom in September 2012, the [health ministry](#) said.

At the same time, the ministry said 16 new infections nationwide have raised the total number of cases diagnosed to 361, representing the bulk of infections registered globally.

Public concern over the spread of MERS mounted earlier this month after the resignation of at least four doctors at Jeddah's King Fahd Hospital who refused to treat patients for fear of infection.

Acting health minister Adel Fakieh said Tuesday that measures to contain the spread of MERS "will be announced in the coming days" as Western experts and representatives of the World Health Organisation met in Riyadh this week.

MERS 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.

There are no vaccines or antiviral treatments for MERS, a severe respiratory disease with a mortality rate of more than 40 percent that experts are still struggling to understand.

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