

UAE reports 12 new cases of MERS

April 20 2014

Health authorities in the United Arab Emirates have announced 12 new cases of infection by the MERS coronavirus, but insisted the patients would be cured within two weeks.

The health ministry said the cases were discovered during "routine checks" on people who had contact with infected individuals, according to a statement published late Saturday by WAM state news agency.

Those infected by the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome are kept in hospitals and "should be cured without a treatment within 10 to 14 days," the statement said.

One of six Filipino paramedics diagnosed with the disease in the eastern city of Al-Ain died earlier this month.

The World Health Organisation said Thursday that it has been informed of a total of 243 laboratory-confirmed cases of infection worldwide, including 93 deaths.

Neighbouring Saudi Arabia remains the worst-hit country, with a total death toll of 76 people, out of 231 cases of infection.

Panic over the spread of MERS among medical staff in the western Saudi city of Jeddah this month forced the temporary closure of a [hospital emergency room](#), prompting Health Minister Abdullah al-Rabiah to visit the facility in a bid to calm the public.

The virus 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.

Experts are still struggling to understand MERS, for which there is no known vaccine.

A recent study said the virus has been "extraordinarily common" in camels for at least 20 years, and may have been passed directly from the animals to humans.

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