

UAE coronavirus death toll rises to 10 (Update)

June 4 2014

The MERS coronavirus has killed 10 people and infected 68 in the United Arab Emirates since March 2013, the health minister said in comments published in the media on Wednesday.

The minister, Abdul Rahman al-Owais, gave the toll in remarks to the national federal council, a partially-elected parliament, saying six UAE nationals and four foreigners had died from the disease, newspapers said.

Sixty-eight people have been infected since March 2013, when the country's first case of MERS was diagnosed, he added.

In April, health authorities in the UAE said a Filipino paramedic diagnosed with the disease in the eastern city of Al-Ain had died.

In neighbouring Qatar, the health authorities said nine people have been infected by MERS since the illness appeared, and that five of them had died.

The last MERS infection in Qatar was registered in November, said the statement carried on the official QNA news agency.

Saudi Arabia, another UAE neighbour, remains the country worst hit by the virus.

The kingdom's health ministry revised its own death toll from the virus

on Tuesday from 190 to 282 people.

It said the hike was due to a "comprehensive revision" tracing patients' files back to 2012, when the first case was diagnosed.

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

Like SARS, it appears to cause a lung infection, with patients suffering coughing, breathing difficulties and a temperature. But MERS differs in that it causes rapid kidney failure.

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