

Three Filipino health workers infected with MERS in Saudi Arabia

March 6 2015

Three Filipinos have contracted Middle East respiratory syndrome while working at separate hospitals in Saudi Arabia, the Philippine government said Friday.

Two are nurses and the third is a medical technician, said Department of Foreign Affairs spokesman Charles Jose. They are in the early stage of the infection after being exposed to MERS patients, Jose said.

He said an emergency room nurse is isolated in staff housing and the other two in their respective hospitals.

MERS was discovered in 2012 and the illnesses have been centered in the kingdom. It belongs to the family of coronaviruses that includes the common cold and SARS, and can cause fever, breathing problems, pneumonia and kidney failure.

Jose said 10 Filipinos have died of MERS since 2013—eight in Saudi Arabia and two in the United Arab Emirates. Hundreds of Filipinos work in hospitals and [health care facilities](#) in the kingdom.

The Saudi Health Ministry last month reported that 385 people have died of MERS among 902 cases discovered in the kingdom.

The Philippines has had one confirmed MERS case—a nurse who returned from Saudi Arabia last month and who has since recovered, Health Department spokesman Lyndon Lee Suy said.

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