

MERS death toll rises to nine in S. Korea

June 10 2015

South Korea on Wednesday reported two more deaths from Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), bringing to nine the total number of deaths in the current outbreak.

Thirteen new cases were also confirmed, expanding the list of known cases to 108 following the diagnosis of the first infected patient on May 20, the [health ministry](#) said.

The two latest fatalities include a 75-year-old woman and a 62-year-old man, both victims of the largest outbreak of the virus outside Saudi Arabia.

The pair contracted the virus at Samsung Medical Centre, a major hospital in southern Seoul which has seen the greatest number of total infections and where 10 of the 13 new patients were also infected.

The three other new victims had their diagnoses confirmed at three different hospitals, including two in the central city of Daejeon and one near a southern suburb of Seoul.

All the infections were limited to hospitals and health authorities stressed that the outbreak had not spread to communities outside hospital settings.

The nine dead people had pre-existing health conditions, the ministry said.

The virus is considered a deadlier but less infectious cousin of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), which killed hundreds of people when it appeared in Asia in 2003.

There is no vaccine or cure for MERS which, according to World Health Organization (WHO) data, has a fatality rate of around 35 percent.

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