Saudi death toll from new virus reaches 18

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(AP)—Saudi Arabia's Health Ministry says a woman has died from a new respiratory virus related to SARS, bringing the total number of deaths in the kingdom to 18.

Saudi Arabia remains the center for the virus as investigators from the World Health Organization seek more clues about its origins and how it is spread.

Last week, WHO officials said at least 22 people have died from the virus worldwide out of 44 cases.

The Saudi Health Ministry announced the virus' latest victim in a statement Sunday. The ministry says a foreigner also died of the virus in Saudi Arabia last Tuesday after having pneumonia-like symptoms. No other details were released.

The virus has been compared to SARS, a respiratory infection that surfaced in China in late 2002.

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