

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (204) in DH SEB CD/8/93/1 Pt.5

2 June 2015

Dear Doctors,

**Additional Cases of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome in
Korea**

Further to our letter yesterday, we would like to update you of the situation of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) in Korea. The health authority of Korea has reported 7 additional MERS cases today. Five cases were in-patients or visitors who had contact with the index case (68-year-old man) in the hospital during the period from May 15-17. For the remaining two cases, they were in-patients who stayed in the same ward with another confirmed MERS case in another hospital from May 28 – 30. These two cases did not have direct contact with the index and could be regarded as tertiary cases.

To date, 25 MERS cases have been involved in this outbreak, including 24 cases confirmed by Korea and an additional case exported to Huizhou, Guangdong from Korea. Among the cases, two deaths have been reported by Korea today involving a 71-year-old man and a 58-year-old woman. Both had chronic medical diseases.

In view of this evolving situation in Korea, we advise the public to avoid unnecessary visit to healthcare facilities in Seoul, Korea, **and that includes exchange programmes in healthcare facilities**. We would like to reiterate the importance of stringent infection control in the hospital settings. Healthcare workers (HCWs) should apply standard precautions consistently with all patients in all work practices at all times. Droplet precautions should be added when providing care to patients with symptoms of acute respiratory infection. Contact precautions and eye protection should be added when caring for probable or confirmed MERS cases, and airborne precautions should be applied when performing aerosol-generating procedures.



Moreover, we would like to remind you that the reporting criteria for suspected case of MERS have already been revised to include one additional epidemiological criteria, i.e., *visited a healthcare facility in Seoul, Korea*. Any persons fulfilling the clinical criteria as well as the epidemiological criteria are regarded as a suspected case and should be reported to the Centre for Health Protection for prompt investigation. We will closely monitor the situation and review the reporting criteria as appropriate.

Thank you for your unfailing support in prevention and control of communicable diseases.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Shuk-kwan', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

(Dr. Chuang Shuk-kwan)
for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health

An individual fulfilling both the ***Clinical Criteria*** **AND** ***Epidemiological Criteria*** should be reported to CHP for further investigation.

Clinical Criteria

A person with acute respiratory syndrome which may include fever ($\geq 38^{\circ}\text{C}/100.4^{\circ}\text{F}$) and cough

- requiring hospitalization

OR

- with suspicion of lower airway involvement (clinical or radiological evidence of consolidation) not explained by any other infection or any other aetiology

AND

Epidemiological Criteria

One or more of the followings within **2-14 days** before onset of illness

- close contact* with a confirmed or probable case of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome while the case was ill

OR

- residence in or history of travel to the Arabian Peninsula or neighboring countries (i.e., areas/countries bounded by Iran, Turkey and Egypt, including Iran but not Turkey and Egypt)

OR

- *Visited a healthcare facility in Seoul, Korea (tentatively until June 15, 2015 for this criterion)#*

*** Close contact is defined as:**

- Anyone who provided care for the patient, including a health care worker or family member, or who had other similarly close physical contact;
- Anyone who stayed at the same place (e.g. lived with, visited) as a probable or confirmed case while the case was ill.

#Due to the evolving situation of MERS in Korea, it will be reviewed from time to time and medical practitioners will be informed of any extension/change by letter.