

Beat: Health

Novel coronavirus claims 39th victim after patient dies in Saudi Arabia

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USPA News - A patient who was previously diagnosed with the new novel coronavirus (nCoV), which emerged in the Middle East last year, has died at a hospital in Saudi Arabia, health officials confirmed on Monday, raising the overall death toll from the SARS-like virus to nearly 40. The Ministry of Health in Saudi Arabia said one more person had died after earlier laboratory tests confirmed the patient was suffering from the novel coronavirus. The unidentified victim had been admitted to a hospital in the kingdom on April 26 and remained in a critical condition for nearly two months, but no other details were released.

The ministry also announced two additional laboratory-confirmed cases of the novel coronavirus, which is also known as the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV). One patient was described as a 41-year-old woman who previously had contact with another person suffering from the illness while the second patient is a 32-year-old male with underlying medical conditions, leaving him in a critical condition. The new coronavirus first emerged in the Middle East last year and is now known to have infected at least 70 people, including 39 people who died from the illness. The disease appeared at a health care facility in Saudi Arabia's eastern province of Ahsaa in May and infected at least fifteen patients, more than a month after the last case of the virus had been reported. Later in May, France confirmed the country's first case of the novel coronavirus in a patient who recently traveled to Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, where another case had been reported in March. The victim eventually died, and a second person who shared a hospital room in Valenciennes with the first patient remains in a critical condition with the same illness. Experts are still unsure how people are being infected, whether it is from animals, from contaminated surfaces, or from other people. And although there is no evidence yet of continuous human-to-human transmission, the World Health Organization (WHO) has said it appears likely that the virus is able to pass from person-to-person in the event of close contact. WHO Director-General Margaret Chan sounded the alarm over the virus during her closing remarks at the 66th World Health Assembly late last month, warning that the virus "poses a threat to the entire world" and urging the international community to come together to combat the threat. "The novel coronavirus is not a problem that any single affected country can keep to itself or manage all by itself. The novel coronavirus is a threat to the entire world," Chan said. "Through WHO and the IHR, we need to bring together the assets of the entire world in order to adequately address this threat. We need more information, and we need it quickly, urgently."

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