

النشرة الوبائية السعودية تصدرها وزارة الصحة - الرياض الوكالة المساعدة للطب الوقائي وبرنامج الوبائيات المحلي ربع سنوية - المجلد الأول - العدد الأول - ربيع أول ١٤١٤هـ

Surveillance: Information for action

In 1991, the World Health Organization (WHO) designated surveillance as a critical element in the effort to attain the following objectives: the eradication of polio by 2000, the elimination of neonatal tetanus by 1995, and a 90% reduction in the number of measles cases compared with pre-immunization levels.

WHO considers surveillance of these diseases as one of the four critical elements necessary to attain these objectives. Globally, it is estimated that only 1 in 10 cases of acute polio, 1 in 20 measles cases and 1 in 33 neonatal tetanus cases are reported. This means that outbreaks are not being investigated, high-risk areas or groups are not being identified, and risk factors are not being corrected.

WHO recommends several key policy elements to strengthen surveillance. They include:

- Improving timeliness, completeness and accuracy of reporting
- Circulating standard case definitions
- Instituting a system of zero reporting if no cases have been seen
- Establishing outbreak and case investigation, reporting and response
- Identifying and focusing on high-risk areas and high-risk groups
- Developing a system for feedback.

The Kingdom's program to reduce measles cases: Page 4.

Using the computer to enhance surveillance: Page 5.

A poliomyelitis eradication plan: Page 7.

Reports of notifiable diseases: Page 8.

A message from the Ministry of Health

On behalf of the Ministry of Health, I welcome you to the first issue of *Saudi Epidemiology Bulletin*. The publication of this bulletin is an example of the support that the ministry is giving to the crucial area of preventive medicine.

The objectives of this publication are:

-- To provide a means of communication between the MOH's preventive medicine department and medical staff throughout the Kingdom and to disseminate information about disease and preventive measures to all medical personnel;

-- To offer a forum where both MOH and regional health workers can present surveillance data, giving medical personnel throughout the Kingdom the opportunity to study the patterns of disease; and

-- To publish results of epidemiological investigations done both by the Field Epidemiology Training Program and by others, providing all health workers the opportunity to learn new prevention techniques and to reinforce old ones.

We are sure that this information will be beneficial to the staffs of the medical colleges and other leading health institutes as well as to regional and local health professionals. We invite the participation of all readers to make this publication a success.

Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Suailem
Deputy Minister
Ministry of Health

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