

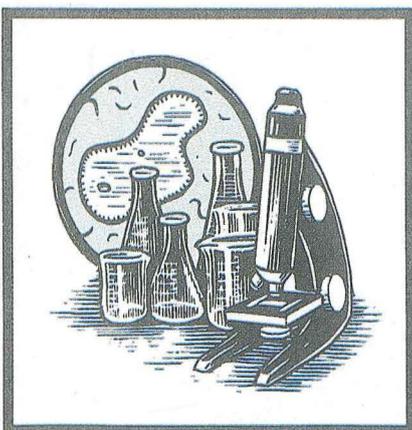
Wristbands

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Editorial note: This study showed many different types of WB to be in existence. Not all the WB distributed by ENEP contained space for identification or health status. The health sectors and physicians in Makkah did not try to inform the pilgrims of the importance of wearing WB. PHCC were negligent introducing and distributing WB to pilgrims. Even hospitals in Makkah did not fill in the information completely. There was a great deal of misunderstanding about the purpose of WB, and this explains why a high percentage of pilgrims from SA and the Gulf Region were not wearing WB.

The high percentage of pilgrims wearing the WB showed pilgrims approved and understood the importance of wearing WB. It was unfortunate, however that many of these WB did not meet the criteria required by MOH. The study results suggest that it would be easy to change all types of WB used recently to the WB designed by MOH.

WB wearing can be promoted by reminding physicians in the PHCC of the importance of WB, by distributing WB to everyone wishing to perform Hajj, and by advertising using posters and pamphlets. Advertising should begin one month before Hajj season. Public messages should be continually broadcast during the Hajj season on the importance of wearing WB. MOH must coordinate with ENEP and make sure WB contain all necessary information. Offices should be established at Saudi borders to distribute the WB.



Food poisoning in Makkah, Hajj 1415 H

Eight women from four different families decided to perform Hajj together. Six of the women live in Makkah, the other two live in Al Baha. The family from Al Baha stayed with one of the families in Makkah. The women decided that each family would prepare one food item to share among the group while performing Hajj.

On the morning of 9 Dhul Higga H (May 9 G) between 8:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m., the three families from Makkah prepared food for the trip at their separate homes. The two women from Al Baha contributed by helping one of the Makkah families. One woman prepared koftah sandwiches for the group and for her two children. She gave the children koftah sandwiches for breakfast and for lunch before taking them to the baby-sitter. That afternoon all eight women and their driver left for Arafat in one car. The food for the trip was packed in plastic containers, but not packed in coolers or on ice.

In Arafat they shared some of the communal food. No individual food item was eaten by more than two women. They did not eat the koftah.

After 6:00 p.m., they all drove from Arafat to Muzdalifah. At 9:00 p.m. after they had arrived, they ate dinner. All eight women ate koftah

sandwiches. Two women also ate meat sandwiches and one also ate cheese sandwiches.

The next morning, 10 Dhul Higga H (May 10 G), between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. all eight women developed diarrhea and abdominal cramps. All eight had nausea but nobody vomited. Fever was reported by four patients but not documented. No organism was isolated from the stool.

The two children who had eaten the koftah sandwiches for breakfast and lunch before being taken to the baby-sitter remained well. All eight women had fully recovered in less than two days.

--Reported by Mr. Yahia Mohammed Ali Al-Gahatani (Sahara Hospital, Riyadh) and Dr. Tomader Saeed Kurdi (Environmental Health Department MOH).

Editorial note: As the attack rate (AR) for the koftah sandwiches was 100%, and no other food was eaten by more than two women, it appears that koftah was responsible for the outbreak. Since the children who ate freshly cooked koftah did not become sick, the responsible organism probably required a period of multiplication

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Meningococcal meningitis vaccination

The Ministry of Health wanted to verify the vaccination coverage in 1416 H for meningococcal meningitis (MCM) in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy to protect pilgrims from MCM which had been implemented in the past few years. The group of pilgrims who were interviewed about wristbands were also asked about their MCM vaccination status. The coverage was 98.5% among the 400 pilgrims interviewed.

Only six of the pilgrims interviewed were not vaccinated, four of them due to time constraints. The main source of information about MCM vaccination was the press (45%) for pilgrims coming from inside Saudi Arabia (SA) and Hajj department (51%) for those coming from outside SA.

—Reported by Dr. Adel Turkistani, Dr. Nader Alshreef, and Dr. Nasser Al Hamdan. (Field Epidemiology Training Program).