

West Nile virus circulation in the EpiSouth countries and neighbouring areas (Hungary and Russia)

27 September 2010

This document was elaborated with the information provided by National EpiSouth Focal Point and the contribution of work packages on Zoonoses and coordination

- Since the beginning of August 2010, 7 EpiSouth countries have reported West Nile (WN) outbreaks.
 - 350 human WN infections have been reported in 6 countries: Greece, Israel, Italy, Romania, Spain & Turkey. For Greece and Turkey, these WN human infections are the first ever reported in the country.
 - 4 countries reported equine WN cases: Greece, Italy, Morocco and Spain.
- Among the 17 EpiSouth countries who provided information, to date, on their **West Nile surveillance system**:
 - 7 countries have permanent **human surveillance system** and 5 have seasonal surveillance system.
 - 7 countries maintain permanent **equine surveillance** system and 3 have seasonal surveillance
 - For **bird surveillance**, only France maintains a permanent surveillance. Three countries have seasonal surveillance: Italy, Palestine and Jordan.
 - 5 countries have **neither human nor equine surveillance**. To date, these countries never reported West Nile cases (cf. Table 1).
 - Information is still expected for 10 EpiSouth countries.
- **Areas at risk.**
 - According to information provided, areas considered at risk for West Nile within each EpiSouth country vary.
 - Areas at risk for WN virus are those which are located on main migratory routes (cf. [eWEB n°127](#)).
 - For instance, areas considered at risk can be:
 - The whole country (e.g. Israel, Palestine, Cyprus, ...)
 - Areas located on the Mediterranean shore (e.g. the Eastern part of Tunisia (Sousse and Gabès), South-East of France, some areas of Italy etc.)
 - Areas bordering major river / wet area (e.g. for Romania, districts bordering the Danube river)
- **Capacities laboratory** (cf. Table 1).

Among the 12 responding countries,

 - 1 has not identified a reference laboratory
 - 2 have identified a reference lab but cannot currently perform West Nile testing.
 - One has an external reference lab
 - 8 have a national WN reference laboratory
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- Given the current situation and the intensification of West Nile virus circulation in neighbouring areas, some countries (e.g. Malta and Syria) are considering the implementation of an epidemiological surveillance.

Table 1 – Overview West Nile epidemiological information and surveillance systems (As of 27th September 2010)

	Countries	Endemic	N Human cases (death)	N Equine cases (death)	Human surveillance	Equine surveillance	Reference laboratory (for human cases)
1	Albania	Not	0	0			
2	Algeria	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	Bosnia & Herzegovina	-	0	0	No surveillance	No surveillance	Yes (in B&H)
4	Bulgaria						
5	Croatia	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	Cyprus	Not	0	0	No surveillance	permanent	-
7	Egypt	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	France	Not	0	0	Permanent + seasonally enhanced	permanent	Yes (in France)
9	Greece		246 (29)	6	Permanent	Permanent (passive)	Yes (in Greece)
10	Israel	Yes	58	0			
11	Italy	Yes	1	24 (2)	seasonal (some regions)	seasonal	Yes (in Italy)
12	Jordan	Not	0	0	permanent (passive)	seasonal	Yes (in Jordan)
13	Kosovo						
14	Lebanon						
15	Libya						
16	Macedonia						
17	Malta	Not	0	0	No surveillance	No surveillance	not available
18	Montenegro	Not	0	0	No surveillance	No surveillance	Yes (in Montenegro)
19	Morocco		0	24 (10)	permanent (passive)	surveillance	-
20	Palestine	Not	0	0	permanent + seasonally enhanced	seasonal	WHO Geneva
21	Romania	Yes	37 (4)	0	seasonal	permanent	Yes (in Romania)
22	Serbia						
23	Slovenia	Not	0	0	No surveillance	permanent	Yes (in Slovenia)
24	Spain	Not	1	2			
25	Syria	Not	0	0	No surveillance	No surveillance	-
26	Tunisia	Not	0	0	permanent (some regions) + seasonally enhanced	permanent	Yes (in Tunis)
27	Turkey	Not	7 (3)		permanent (passive)	permanent	Yes (in Ankara)
	TOTAL	3	350 (36)	56 (12)			

Situation on EpiSouth countries (31st August - 27th September 2010)

- **Greece:** Since epidemic's onset, 246 human cases (including 29 deaths) have been confirmed.
 - 24 cases, in elderly patients with underlying diseases, were fatal.
 - The median age of the patients was 72 years old and, 58% were aged above 70 years.
 - 97 (54%) were male and 82 (46%) were female.
- **Israel:**
 - To date, 58 human WN infections have been reported.
 - In 2000 a large outbreak occurred from mid-July to the end of October, with 452 confirmed cases and 29 deaths.
 - Between 2001 and 2007 the number of annual cases ranged from 10 and 110 cases and 0-5 deaths.
- **Romania:** 37 Human WN cases have been reported in the following areas are Alba, Calarasi, Constanta, Ialomita, Cluj, Dolj, Galati, Mures, Mehedinti, Sibiu, Iasi, Vaslui, Teleorman, Vrancea and the capital Bucharest.
- **Turkey:** 7 Human WN cases including 3 deaths were reported in Aegean and Marmara regions. These are the first ever reported the country.
- **Italy:**
 - A single WN case has been reported in 2010. To date, this case has only been confirmed by the regional laboratory and was identified through the surveillance system for fevers implemented only in the Veneto region. The case does not fulfil the National case definition and national reference laboratory confirmation is pending.
 - Equine cases were reported in 7 provinces: Emilia-Romagna, Veneto, Lombardia, Toscana, Lazio, Mosile and Sicilia.
- **Morocco:**
 - No human case reported to date in 2010. 24 equine cases (including 10 deaths) were reported in Benslimane, Khemisset, Mohammedia provinces and Casablanca.
 - The latest human WN infection was reported in 1996 (1 case) during an outbreak among horses (94 cases including 42 deaths).
 - The latest equine WN outbreak occurred in September and October 2003 in the province of Kenitra (8 equine cases including 5 deaths)

- **Spain:** 1 human case and 2 equine cases have been reported in Andalusia province. The WN equine outbreaks are the first ever reported to OIE.

EpiSouth countries with no recent WN cases

- **Palestine:** The latest human autochthonous cases were reported in 3 patients in 2006 in Qalqelia district.
- **France:** Latest human autochthonous WN cases were reported in 2003 and last equine cases in 2006.
- **Tunisia:** The last WN outbreak occurred in 2003 with 31 confirmed cases human in Monsatir, Mahdia, Sousse, Sfax and Gabès governorates.

Non EpiSouth neighbouring countries

- **Russia:**
 - From 07 July to 15 September 2010, 448 cases including 6 deaths were reported in the regions of Volgograd, Rostov, Voronezh, Krasnodar, Astrakhan, Kalmoukia and Chelyabinsk.
 - On September 15, 2010, Russian authorities reported at least one WN case in Chelyabinsk (the first in this region), south west of the Russian federation, and north of Kazakhstan. Other suspected cases are under investigation.
- **Hungary:**
 - As of 2nd of September, 3 confirmed cases have been reported by the Hungarian health authorities.
 - The cases were reported in the Central Hungarian region and one case lives near the Romanian border.
 - Epidemiological investigations are ongoing and enhanced surveillance has been implemented.



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