

ABSTRACT

The Middle-East and Africa Influenza Surveillance Network (MENA-ISN), established in 2014, includes 15 countries at present. Country representatives presented their influenza surveillance programmes, vaccine coverage and influenza control actions achieved, and provided a list of country surveillance/control objectives for the upcoming 3 years. This report details the current situation of influenza surveillance and action plans to move forward in MENA-ISN countries. Data were presented at the 8th MENA-ISN meeting, organized by the Mérioux Foundation that was held on 10-11 April 2018 in Cairo, Egypt. The meeting included MENA-ISN representatives from 12 countries (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Tunisia and United Arab Emirates) and experts from the Canadian Centre for Vaccinology, and the World Health Organization. Meeting participants concluded that influenza remains a significant threat especially in high-risk groups (children under-5, elderly, pregnant women and immunosuppressed individuals) in the MENA-ISN region. Additional funding and planning are required by member countries to contain this threat. Future meetings will need to focus on creative and innovative ways to inform policy and initiatives for vaccination, surveillance and management of influenza-related morbidity and mortality especially among the most vulnerable groups of the population.

KEYWORDS. influenza, MENA-ISN, Middle East, North, East and South Africa, surveillance, vaccination coverage