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MERS the epidemic whirlwind

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Recent outbreak of MERS (Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome) in the Saudi Arabia started off as a simple case, when a patient who was experiencing respiratory complications was brought into a private Hospital in Jeddah and his condition was getting worse without any explanation, the doctors took a sample of the sputum and diagnosed the disease as one he had identified many times before. This case was different however. The normal tests carried out did not give a positive for any of the known viruses as they should have had. The novel coronavirus or as it has now been renamed to as MERS-CoV has been prevalent in much of the Middle East and Europe with the primary sites including the countries of Qatar, Jordan, the UAR and Saudi Arabia. Secondary virus exposure has also been seen in UK, France, Italy, Tunisia and Germany and has been caused by some sort of human to human interaction. MERS is closely linked to bat coronaviruses seen in China (BtCoV-HKU4 and BtCoV-HKU5) and is related to its phylogenetically. The natural reservoir of the virus has not yet been identified; however, seeing how it is so closely related to bats, it can be seen as that could have emerged from bats and from their environment. It is thought that there has been some form of transmutation to the humans through domesticated pets and livestock; however, it still has to be proven by hard evidence.

Biography

Ilham Qattan is an Assistant Professor of Medical and Molecular Virology, Deputy Director of the Medical laboratories and department, Faculty of Applied Medical Sciences. She is a member of the board directors of the Genetic and Gene Diseases Center, Head of Prince Mohammed Bin Fahd Chair for Viral Hepatitis scientific Chair in Al Medina Al Monwara, also a Member of the American Association of the Liver Diseases and Member of the Editorial Board of the *European Scientific Journal*. She has more than 23 articles published in international & local journals, and is a scientific adjudicate at King Abdul-Aziz City for Science and Technology.

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