

NO ZIKA VIRUS CASES DETECTED IN KUWAIT: HEALTH MINISTRY

GOVT COMMITTED TO PROTECTION OF PATIENTS' RIGHTS: OFFICIAL

KUWAIT: No cases of the mosquito-borne Zika virus, which spread in Latin American countries, were registered in Kuwait, the Ministry of Health (MoH) said in a statement, reiterating its ability to detect related infections.

The MoH has been carrying nationwide surveillance of insects and there was no evidence that the Aedes aegypti mosquito, which carries the Zika virus, exists in Kuwait, Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health Dr Majda Al-Qattan said in a statement. She said the MoH was in contact with the regional office of the World Health Organization (WHO) to know the latest developments about the virus and how to deal with it.

Qattan said the MoH instructed all hospitals and clinics to immediately contact preventative health department and laboratories to adopt necessary preventive measures in case they discovered signs of Zika virus on any traveler. She said the virus would not transmit among humans but through the mosquito, which could only happen if a person travels to countries with the insects.

Qattan said symptoms of Zika virus would be fever, skin rash and eye inflammation, which might extend from 2-7 days. She said the WHO did not yet issue any travel warning to

infected countries, however the MoH was advising against traveling to Zika-hit nations unless necessary. The WHO said earlier today that a rise in birth defects in Latin America was strongly suspected of being caused by Zika virus.

Patients' rights

In other news, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health Dr Khaled Al-Sahlawi confirmed his ministry's unshaken commitment to provision of healthcare starting from primary health at medical centers to preventive and treatment services at public hospitals.

"The medical centers and specialized clinics, which are fairly distributed countrywide, have seen remarkable improvement in the recent years," Sahlawi said Monday on the occasion of the Gulf Patients' Rights Day, based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The declaration, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948, includes an article stipulating patient right to equitable medical treatment to ensure human dignity.

During their meeting in Kuwait in January, 2014, the health ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states designated February 1,

as Gulf Patients' Rights Day meant to raise awareness about these rights and the need to strengthen the relationship between patients and medical service providers.

Sahlawi said the Ministry has provided all public hospitals and medical centers with the latest equipment and drugs, and the most qualified medical personnel. "The Ministry works constantly to expand the occupancy of the health facilities and build new facilities in order to keep abreast with the growth in population in addition to providing the medical personnel with specialized training regularly," he pointed out.

Medical errors

Regarding the medical errors, he said the Ministry spares no effort in investigating them and setting strict regulations and controls to prevent their recurrence in the future. "The Ministry works to raise the awareness of patients and their families, on one hand, the medical staff, on the other, about the possible risks a patient might face during treatment in order to let both sides share the responsibility in this regard," Dr Sahlawi went on.

He noted that healthcare and the patients' rights are enshrined in Kuwait's constitution which stipulates that the state is responsible for public health and that healthcare is the cornerstone of development.

"The GCC health ministers' council attaches great importance to the patients' rights, thereby adopting guidelines in this regard to serve as a single law for all GCC states. In December, 2015, the first GCC conference on patients' rights was held in Saudi Arabia under the slogan "patient first, to review the measures and regulations on patient safety and roles of the health facilities and medical personnel in this connection," he recalled.

Dr Sahlawi added at the behest of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Ministry of Health set a comprehensive vision for guaranteeing the patients' rights, prioritizing the people with special needs and preventing medical errors. — KUNA



TEGUCIGALPA: Fathers with their children crowd a hospital in Tegucigalpa, on February 1, 2016. Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernandez on Friday declared the country on a preventive state of alert due to the Zika virus which in the last 44 days killed a person and infected some 1,000. — AFP

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