

Monkeypox Update

Rit 2.0 Lebanon Team



On 20 May 2022 news about monkeypox started to reach local news media and social media outlets in Lebanon. As soon as that happened, rumors started to circulate. To-date, procedures and measures to-be taken by the Lebanese government and private health sector organizations remain controlled, with staying alert to new cases and setting up surveillance, early identification and reporting, and investigation tools in coordination with WHO. As for procurement of tests and vaccines, there is no need for it at the national level as of yet, as there are no active cases reported in Lebanon nor anywhere close in the region, and it is a controllable virus with limited serious side effects, more visible symptoms than COVID-19 and less transmission and mortality rates.

Rumor

"I heard that the first 2 cases of monkeypox in Lebanon are found in the South."



Traditional media outlet



The Ministry of Health stressed on Monday 23 May 2022 that "there is no reported or suspected case of monkeypox in Lebanon so far, and if there were any, it would be officially announced by the Ministry."



The head of the Lebanese Doctors Syndicate in Beirut, Dr. Sharaf Abu Sharaf, responded to the above rumor with the following: "what Dr. Muhammad Fahmy Kharroub said, in an interview with him via Al-Jadeed channel, regarding the presence of two cases of monkeypox in Lebanon is not true, there are no cases so far of monkeypox in Lebanon"



Abu Sharaf stressed that "this doctor is not registered in the Syndicate, and therefore has no right to work in Lebanon."

Facts

This Rumor is taken from Twitter

Rumor

"Someone said the test for monkeypox is not available in Lebanon, and that is very dangerous, is that right?"



Diagnostic testing for Orthopoxviruses (which includes monkeypox virus) is available at LRN laboratories located throughout the United States and abroad. There is no commercial assay to detect monkeypox virus.



Since May 2022 cases of monkeypox have been confirmed in at least 12 countries, that are not endemic for monkeypox virus. Due to this development, Altona Diagnostics has received more and more requests from all over the world for PCR tests to detect this virus, and is currently expanding production and distribution. Therefore, once the test is needed in Lebanon, it is possible to be acquired, and there is no real or immediate danger as there are no cases actively spreading yet.

Facts



No Suspected Cases in Lebanon



12 Countries confirmed so far



Monkeypox test can be acquired when needed

Recommendations

For Media Workers

- Increase preparedness efforts by focusing on communicating trusted and factual information, as well as reporting rumors in your community, especially ones that could lead to harm.
- Raising awareness of risk factors and educating people about the measures they can take to reduce exposure to the virus is the main prevention strategy for monkeypox.
- All media outlets should host only official specialists from the Medical Syndicate or from the Ministry of Public Health to talk about this issue.
- All health-related information and communication should be derived from official and trusted sources such as WHO: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/monkeypox> (Arabic version) and the MoPH, as well as its associated organizations. This is because: "the Ministry has all the valid information and developments related to monkeypox, and it is the MoPH who is the official organization responsible for publishing that information and raising awareness about preventive measures, in cooperation with the union."
- It is important to pay extra attention to the LGBT community while reporting sensitive information, and prevent use of any language that might lead to them being harmed, targeted, ostracized, or otherwise discriminated against.

List of Practical Resources

- [Managing epidemics: Key facts about major deadly diseases](#) (page 170) (Geneva: World Health Organization; 2018).
- [Monkeypox: Introduction \(online course\)](#) (Geneva: World Health Organization; 2019).
- [Monkeypox Outbreak Toolbox \(who.int\)](#)
- [Monkeypox \(who.int\)](#)
- [WHO calls monkeypox outbreaks containable, proposes stockpile to share vaccines and treatment](#)

