

SURVEILLANCE FOR DENGUE FEVER IN JEDDAH

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INTRODUCTION

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Dengue fever is an acute self-limited illness characterized by diphasic fever, headache, arthralgia, myalgia, rash, lymphadenopathy and leucopenia. Dengue haemorrhagic fever is a severe form of classic dengue, manifested by thrombocytopenia and haemococentration. In severe cases, circulatory failure and shock (dengue shock syndrome) result from immune enhancement due to reinfection with a different serotype. Dengue fever is caused by the mosquito-borne dengue virus. The primary vector is *Aedes aegypti*; *A. albopictus* is a second potential vector. Dengue virus is an enveloped RNA virus classified in the flavivirus genus (formerly called group B arbovirus) of the Togaviridae family.

Despite the occurrence of dengue fever in some countries bordering the Red Sea during the last ten years, such as Sudan, Senegal, Djibouti and Yemen, its appearance in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia was not expected as the geographical characteristics of Jeddah City (e.g. low rainfall of < 60mm/year) are not suitable for the natural breeding of the vector.