

COVID-19 — Focus on Yemen and Afghanistan

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Yemen

The true burden of the COVID-19 pandemic in Yemen is largely underestimated. The official surveillance data is limited to the southern governorates only. The country has experienced two waves so far and until May 31 2021, the total number of confirmed cases reported was 6 746 with 1 322 associated deaths. With limited testing capacity, PCR tests are spared for suspect cases presenting with severe symptoms only. MSF has been operating several COVID-19 projects in the southern and northern parts since the beginning of the pandemic. To date, MSF France has treated 2 138 COVID-19 patients. The in-hospital mortality was 30%. This presentation provides an overview of the evolution of the pandemic in Yemen and a description of patients seen at MSF health facilities.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan is currently experiencing a third wave of COVID-19. To date (31 May 2021) a total of nearly 73 000 confirmed cases and 3 000 deaths have been reported. The PCR testing capacity remains limited, particularly outside the national capital, and the characteristics of suspected patients are poorly described. MSF has been supporting the pandemic response in Herat, the regional capital of Western Afghanistan, by running a COVID-19 triage at the Herat Regional Hospital and through case management. To date, over 31 000 patients have been received at the triage, and, if required, oriented towards appropriate care. In addition, patient data collected at the triage facility are a valuable surveillance tool since they allow to follow epidemic trends and to describe patient characteristics. Here we give an update about the current situation in Afghanistan and Herat and describe the characteristics of patients through the three epidemic waves.

In this presentation, we provide an overview of the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic in Yemen and Afghanistan and describe the characteristics of patients seen selected MSF health facilities.