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EDITORIAL

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Geographically and demographically, Pakistan is an important country in the East Mediterranean region as it is the fifth most populous country with a strategically important location (1).

Amongst the 22 countries in the East Mediterranean region, Pakistan was most effected by the pandemic after Iran and Iraq as evident by the total number of cases, new deaths reported and Covid-19 mortality. However, as the situation stands, incidence of new cases reported in Pakistan is just above the average for the region. In the East Mediterranean region during the week commencing from 11th to 17th June, the maximum number of new cases (10,291) were diagnosed in Iran. Whereas, the least number of new cases (2) were reported in Yemen during this period. The number of active cases is highest in Iran with 3,070,426 cases in comparison to Yemen which depicts the lowest prevalence in the region.

Pakistan has demonstrated drastic improvements in controlling the spread of infection and thereby reducing the number of new cases. Percentage positivity has decreased from 3.21% to 2.46% over the week which is a noteworthy achievement. Important to mention that 8 countries reported greater number of new cases while 11 countries have fewer new cases documented than Pakistan within the past week. Moreover, incidence of new cases over the week in Pakistan constitutes only about 3.65% of the total new cases in the region. However, Pakistan still accounts for about 8.90% of the point prevalence of Covid-19 infection.

Mortality trend also followed the same declining pattern as illustrated by infectivity. Statistically, out of 480 Covid-19 new deaths in the region, 46 occurred only in Pakistan which is about 9.5% of the total figure for the past week.

Comparative analysis showed that Pakistan ranked fourth for the number of deaths in the given period.

Subsequently, Iran had the highest mortality with 139 deaths while Yemen had the lowest new deaths reported in the East Mediterranean region. Somalia and Djibouti had no deaths documented during this week.

Considering the overall mortality due to the pandemic, only 1 country in the region had total death counts greater than Pakistan while 20 demonstrated death counts lower than Pakistan. Furthermore, Pakistan makes 10.37% of the total death count in the EMR region (2).

Vaccines are playing pivotal role in minimizing the disease spread as well as its severity. Pakistan has focused extensively on vaccination and has now started vaccination of individuals aged 18 years and above. Total vaccine doses administered till date are 12.8 million and daily number of doses administered averages between 0.25 million per day in Pakistan (3).

REFERENCES

1. <http://www.emro.who.int/index.html>
2. <http://twitter.com/WHOEMRO?s=08>
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