BioSpectrum
the business of Bio & Health Sciences
ASIA EDITION

Official MERS death toll rises to 282 in Saudi

June 5, 2014 | News | By BioSpectrum Bureau

Singapore: The deadly MERS puzzle saw a new twist, as Saudi officials revealed a shocking jump in the number of MERS deaths. Saudi Ministry of Health reported that 282 people have died since 2012, a major increment from the previous official death toll of 190.

The increase came after a national review of hospital data from the time the virus emerged in 2012. Following the review, Saudi officials announced that out of a total 688 cases in the Arab nation; 353 patients have recovered and 53 are still receiving treatment.

This revision in the data surfaced the same day the deputy health minister Dr Ziad Memish was relieved. Saudi health ministry spokesman Tariq Madani said that though the review showed confirmed cases that need to be added, there was a decline in newly registered cases in the past few weeks.

Failure on the part of Saudi officials to report the exact numbers of infections and deaths has left WHO and other organizations with a lot of unanswered questions. The WHO's technical lead for the MERS outbreak said a team from the global health agency is in Saudi Arabia and is going through the data on each of the newly disclosed cases and deaths.