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Dubai: A man who died at the reception desk of the Iranian Hospital on Saturday was initially suspected to be suffering from severe acute respiratory syndrome (Sars), but a lab report later showed he had a severe case of a streptococcal disease.

An official at the Dubai Department of Health said the Indian man had visited the hospital two days before his death. He was given treatment and sent home. But he returned as he was feeling very ill and came back to hospital, but died at the reception.

He said the initial medical report issued by the hospital about the reason of the death of the man, was that he was suffering from Sars. A later report showed he died of streptococcal disease, which is contagious and damages the lungs, he said.

Four other patients, also Indian, were admitted to the Iranian Hospital and then transferred to Al Maktoum Hospital were also suspected to have Sars, he said. Later it was found they were suffering from Legionnaires' Disease, a lung infection caused by bacteria which lives in wet places.

The Indian workers are working with a hotel and their job was to clean water tankers. Legionnaires' Disease is also transmitted through the air-conditioning systems, said the source.

The source said that the other two men at Al Maktoum Hospital are suffering from pneumonia.

Legionnaires' Disease symptoms

The bacteria is found in water tanks, he said, but noted that the disease is not contagious. The initial symptom of Legionnaires' Disease is tiredness, exhaustion, headache, muscle ache, diarrhoea and abdominal pain.

The source said most people killed by Legionnaires' Disease die from respiratory failure and there are other fatal complications elsewhere in the body, such as kidney failure and rhabdomyolysis, a breakdown of skeletal muscle.