

Chinese Notifiable Infectious Diseases Surveillance Report

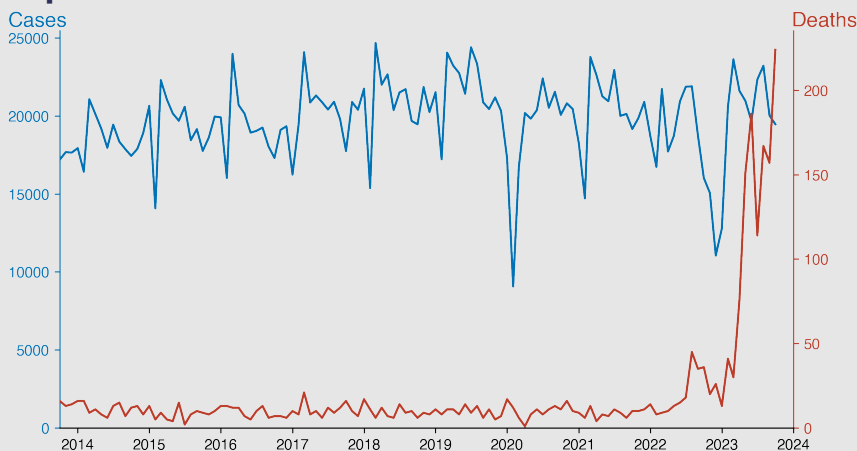
Hepatitis C

October 2023

Introduction

Hepatitis C is a viral infection that primarily affects the liver, leading to inflammation. It is caused by the hepatitis C virus (HCV) and is mostly spread through blood-to-blood contact. The infection can be acute or chronic, with the latter posing a risk for severe liver issues like cirrhosis, liver failure, or liver cancer. Many individuals with hepatitis C may have no symptoms initially, but chronic infection can result in significant health complications over time. Treatments have greatly evolved, with antiviral medications offering a high cure rate for the infection.

Temporal Trend



Highlights

- Gradual increase in Hepatitis C cases observed from 2010 to 2023, emphasizing the need for enhanced public health interventions.
- A dramatic surge in mortalities noticed from 2022, escalating in 2023, indicating potential changes in healthcare system efficacy or virus virulence.
- Marked peaks in cases often occur in the months of March through July, suggesting possible seasonal patterns in transmission or diagnosis rates.
- The October 2023 data shows a substantial mortality rate of about 1.15%, the highest throughout the period, warranting urgent epidemiological assessment and response strategies.

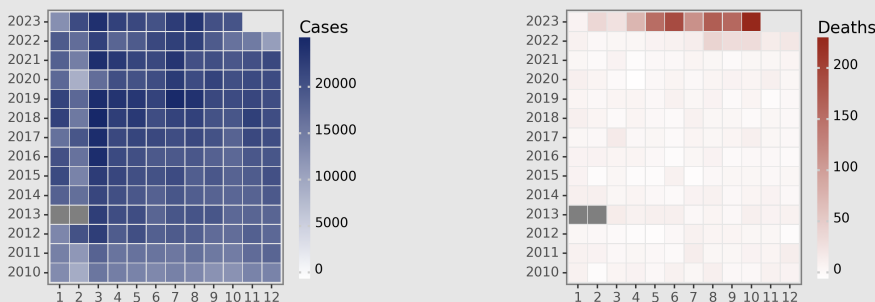
Cases Analysis

Over the period 2010 to 2023, the number of reported Hepatitis C cases in mainland China reveals fluctuations with several peaks and troughs. Initially, cases ranged between 9,594 and 15,716 per month. A general uptrend is observed with peaks in March 2017 (24,076 cases) and again in March 2019 (24,053 cases). The year 2020 showed lower reporting, possibly due to confounding factors like the COVID-19 pandemic. Starting 2022, a marked downward trend is evident with December reporting only 11,050 cases, but there is a rebound in early 2023 with cases rising again to 23,214 in August.

Deaths Analysis

The death toll associated with Hepatitis C in the studied timeframe exhibits an alarming exponential increase, especially noteworthy from June 2022 onwards. The data suggest a minor number of deaths per month, averaging below 20 prior to 2022. However, the mortality rate notably escalates in August 2022, reaching 45 deaths, and continues to surge to unprecedented levels, peaking at 224 deaths in October 2023. This trend hints at significant changes in either the virulence of the virus, access to effective healthcare, reporting practices, or other external health factors not represented in the data.

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