

Chinese Notifiable Infectious Diseases Surveillance Report

Scarlet fever

November 2023

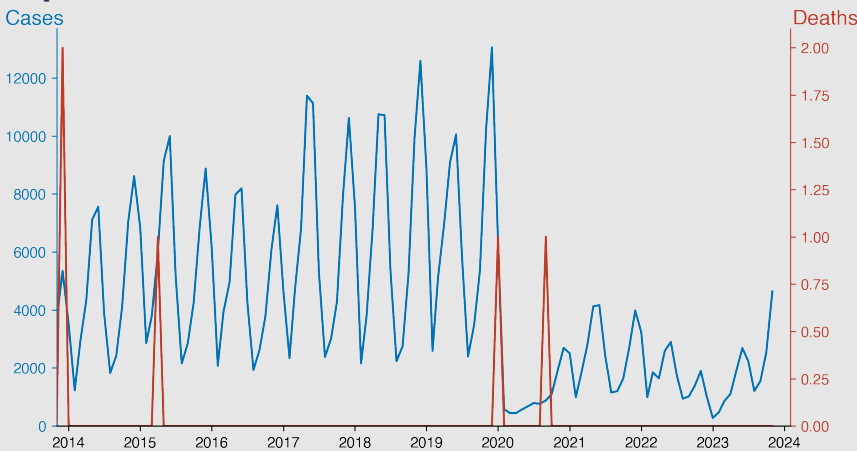
Introduction

Scarlet fever, also known as scarlatina, is a bacterial illness often linked with a sore throat (streptococcal pharyngitis) and characterized by distinct pink-red rash. It is caused by an infection with group A Streptococcus bacteria. The disease primarily affects children, and its distinguishing symptoms involve a high temperature, sore throat, and the prominent 'strawberry' tongue. Prompt treatment with antibiotics is crucial to prevent complications. Scarlet fever was once a severe childhood disease, but now it's treatable with modern medicine.

Highlights

- Scarlet fever in Chinese mainland shows seasonality, peaking from May to July and again in November and December.
- After 2019, cases significantly declined, potentially due to COVID-19 public health measures, with numbers stabilizing at lower levels thereafter.
- The latest surge in November 2023 reached 4637 cases; however, fatalities remain nonexistent, indicating effective case management.
- Overall, mortality is very low, suggesting adequate control and treatment strategies for Scarlet fever in the region.

Temporal Trend



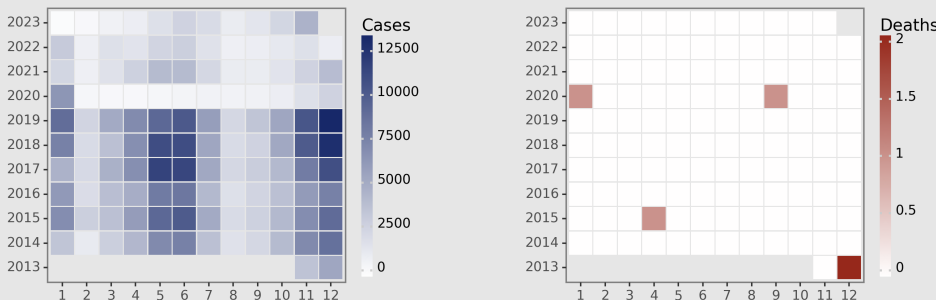
Cases Analysis

Scarlet fever cases in the Chinese mainland exhibit a pronounced seasonality with peaks typically in the months from May to July and a smaller peak around December, as evident in the data spanning from 2013 to 2023. Incidence rates surged notably from 2013, reaching a zenith in June 2019 with 13,053 cases. A drastic decline in cases begins in 2020; this may correlate with COVID-19 pandemic control measures such as social distancing, which likely curbed the transmission of other infectious diseases including Scarlet fever.

Deaths Analysis

The mortality data for Scarlet fever in Chinese mainland from 2013 to 2023 indicate exceedingly low fatality rates, with only three recorded deaths in an entire decade, amidst tens of thousands of cases. Two deaths occurred in 2013, and one each in 2015 and 2020. The scarcity of deaths suggests that although Scarlet fever cases were quite prevalent at certain times, the condition remained non-lethal, possibly due to effective clinical management or the non-virulent nature of the circulating strains.

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