

Chinese Notifiable Infectious Diseases Surveillance Report

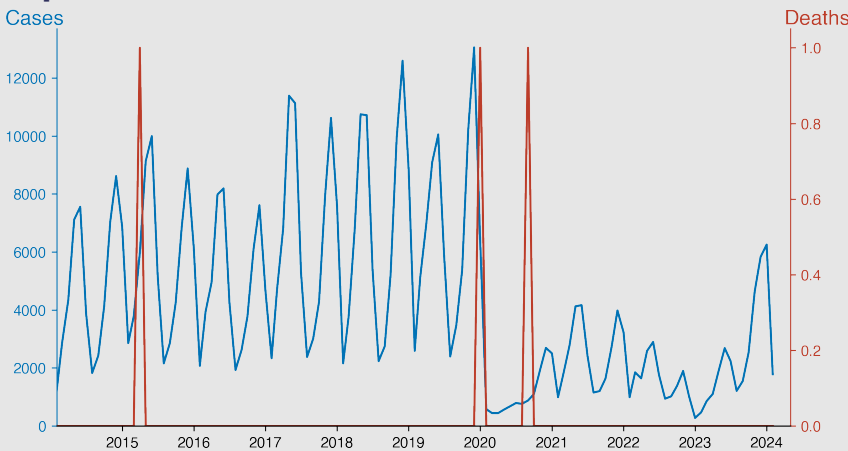
Scarlet fever

February 2024

Introduction

Scarlet fever is an infectious disease caused by the bacterium *Streptococcus pyogenes*, which often affects children. Characterized by a distinctive red rash that feels like sandpaper to the touch, it is typically accompanied by a high fever and sore throat. Other symptoms may include swollen glands, headache, and nausea. The illness spreads through respiratory droplets and is treatable with antibiotics. Left untreated, scarlet fever can lead to serious complications, but with prompt medical care, most individuals recover fully. Vaccinations for scarlet fever are not available, making good hygiene and early treatment essential.

Temporal Trend



Highlights

- Scarlet fever notably peaks during spring and early summer each year across the Chinese mainland with highest cases observed in May and June.
- The number of cases substantially dropped after a peak in December 2019 from 13053 to 580 in February 2020.
- Recent data suggests a steady increase again since March 2023, with January 2024 witnessing 6255 cases, highest since January 2020.
- Despite periodic surges, the disease's fatality rate remained almost nil, with only three deaths over a decade.

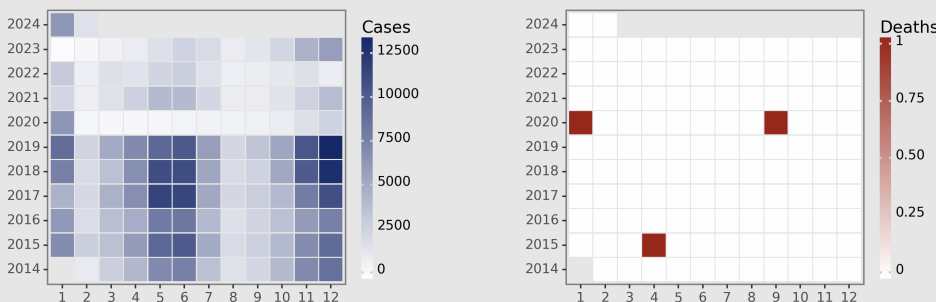
Cases Analysis

The data reveals a recurrent seasonal pattern in Scarlet fever cases in mainland China from 2014 to 2024, with a significant increase in the warmer months, from April to August, and a drop in the colder months. Monthly cases seem to increase each year up until 2020, where there is a significant decline, possibly due to interventions such as vaccinations or public health measures. Post-2020, the numbers began to rise again, yet not to the pre-2020 levels, suggesting a possibly successful long-term impact of such measures.

Deaths Analysis

In the ten-year span of data provided for Scarlet fever, there were only three reported deaths despite fluctuations and peaks in case numbers. The rarity of deaths indicates that, while infections could be widespread, the condition might be considerably non-fatal under the prevailing treatment and management protocols. The three deaths occurred in April 2015, January 2020, and September 2020, demonstrating no direct correlation between the number of cases and fatalities. The low mortality rate suggests effective clinical management of Scarlet fever in China during the reporting period.

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