

Chinese Notifiable Infectious Diseases Surveillance Report

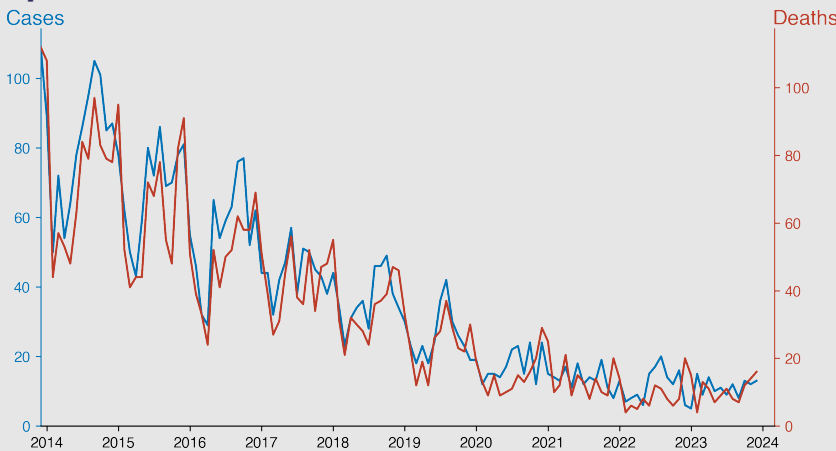
Rabies

December 2023

Introduction

Rabies is a fatal viral zoonotic disease, primarily transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected animal, typically a dog. The virus targets the central nervous system, leading to severe neurological symptoms. After initial flu-like symptoms, rabies often manifests as either furious (hyperactive) or paralytic (gradual paralysis) forms. Despite its rare occurrence, rabies imposes a significant health burden in many developing countries. Vaccination of animals remains the cornerstone of prevention, and human cases are almost entirely preventable through prompt administration of post-exposure prophylaxis. Left untreated, the disease is almost universally fatal.

Temporal Trend



Highlights

- A significant downward trend in rabies cases and deaths is noted over the past decade, with a peak in December 2013 (109 cases and 112 deaths) followed by a general declining pattern.
- Despite fluctuations, the death-to-case ratio has shown consistency, suggesting a steady case-fatality rate through the years.
- The recent figures for December 2023 show a continuance of low case numbers (13) but a slight upsurge in deaths (16) compared to most of the same year.
- Such trends suggest effective long-term rabies control and preventative strategies within Chinese mainland.

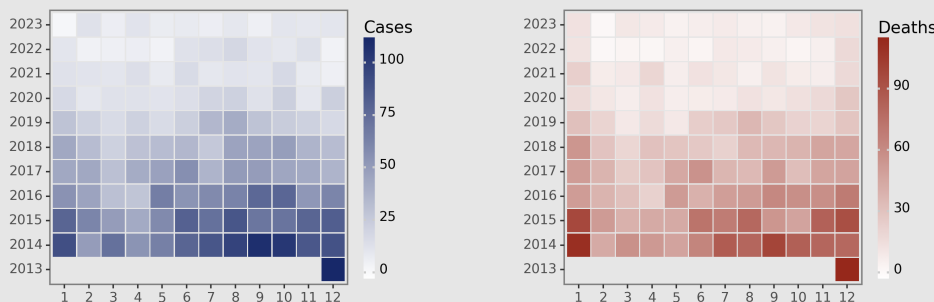
Cases Analysis

The Rabies data from December 2013 to December 2023 for Chinese mainland shows a clear downward trend in cases, with occasional fluctuations. Notably, a significant decrease is observed from 109 cases in December 2013 to just 13 cases in December 2023. Seasonal fluctuations seem evident, with higher numbers often observed in the warmer months from May to October, possibly due to increased human-animal interaction. The overall decline could be attributed to improved vaccination and control strategies for rabies in animal reservoirs, increased public awareness, and better access to post-exposure prophylaxis.

Deaths Analysis

Death counts from rabies in Chinese mainland fell markedly over the 10-year period, from 112 in December 2013 to 16 in December 2023. There is a less pronounced seasonal pattern in fatalities compared to cases, with sporadic peaks and troughs. The decrease in deaths can be linked to enhanced medical interventions, early treatment, and possibly the reduced incidence of rabies cases. However, the fatality rate remains high, suggesting rabies is often fatal once symptoms appear. This underscores the importance of preventative measures, such as animal vaccination, public education, and immediate care post-exposure.

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