

Chinese Notifiable Infectious Diseases Surveillance Report

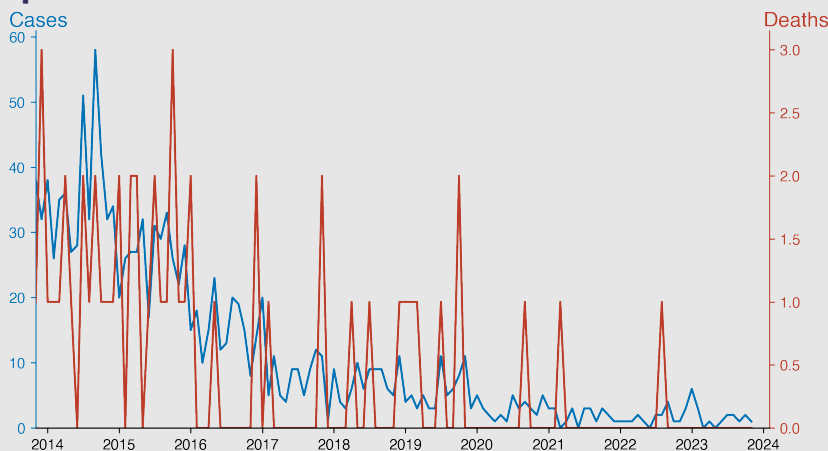
Neonatal tetanus

November 2023

Introduction

Neonatal tetanus is a severe bacterial infection affecting newborns, commonly resulting from unsanitary childbirth conditions. The disease is caused by *Clostridium tetani*, a bacterium found in soil and animal excrement, which can contaminate the umbilical wound. It leads to generalized rigidity and convulsive spasms in infants. Despite being preventable through maternal immunization and hygienic obstetrical practices, it remains a significant cause of neonatal mortality in many developing countries.

Temporal Trend



Highlights

- A significant decreasing trend in neonatal tetanus cases and deaths in the Chinese mainland over the last decade, with cases dropping from 38 in November 2013 to 1 in November 2023.
- The mortality rate has also seen improvement, with multiple months reporting zero deaths, especially in the period from 2021 to November 2023.
- There has been a consistent decline in both cases and deaths since the peak numbers in 2014, exemplifying successful intervention strategies.
- The current disease situation as of November 2023 shows neonatal tetanus to be well-controlled, with only 1 case and no deaths reported.

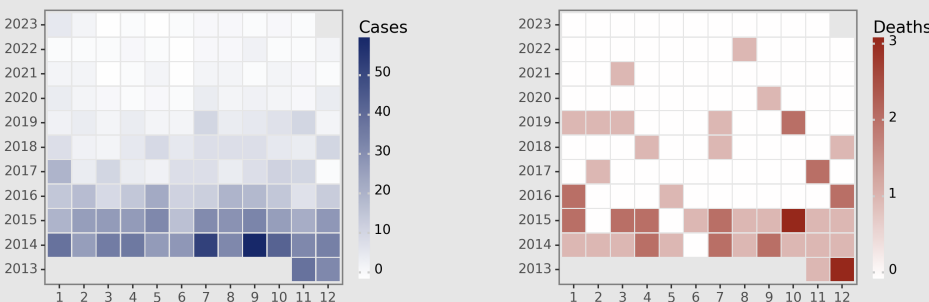
Cases Analysis

Neonatal tetanus cases in Chinese mainland show a notable declining trend from November 2013 to November 2023. The initial months saw higher incidents, with up to 58 cases in September 2014. However, gradually over the years, there has been a significant decrease, arriving at single-digit monthly cases after 2016. Post-2021, the numbers further reduced, staying predominantly at three or fewer cases per month. This persistent decline suggests effective intervention strategies, such as immunization and improved birthing practices, may have been implemented and remained successful over the decade.

Deaths Analysis

The number of deaths due to neonatal tetanus also follows a declining pattern from 2013 to 2023. Initially fluctuating with occasional spikes (up to three deaths in certain months), fatalities have significantly decreased over time, often with months reporting zero deaths post-2015. This reduction can be attributed to improved healthcare access, effective neonatal care, and possibly better community awareness of the disease. The data reflects a successful reduction in mortality rates associated with neonatal tetanus in the Chinese mainland over this period.

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