

Chinese Notifiable Infectious Diseases Surveillance Report

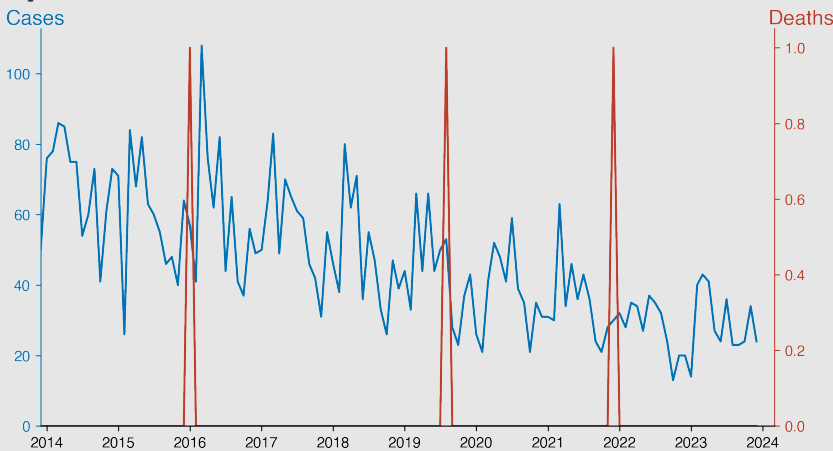
Leprosy

December 2023

Introduction

Leprosy, also known as Hansen's disease, is a chronic infectious disease caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium leprae*. The disease primarily affects the skin and peripheral nerves, resulting in injuries, deformities, and disfigurements. Symptoms include skin lesions, numbness, and muscle weakness. Leprosy is transmitted through respiratory droplets from untreated, sick individuals during close and frequent contact. Despite misconceptions, it is not highly contagious and is curable with a multi-drug therapy. Globally, leprosy is most prevalent in developing countries, often associated with poverty and poor living conditions.

Temporal Trend



Highlights

- Overall declining trend in leprosy cases from 2013 to 2023, with occasional fluctuations such as the spike in 2016.
- Only two recorded deaths over the ten-year span, indicating low mortality associated with leprosy or effective treatment and management in recent years.
- No clear seasonal pattern in the reported cases, which suggests that transmission might not be strongly influenced by seasonal factors.
- Consistently very low case counts in recent years, with all months in 2023 reporting fewer than 50 cases, which could suggest that leprosy is relatively well-controlled in Chinese mainland as of December 2023.

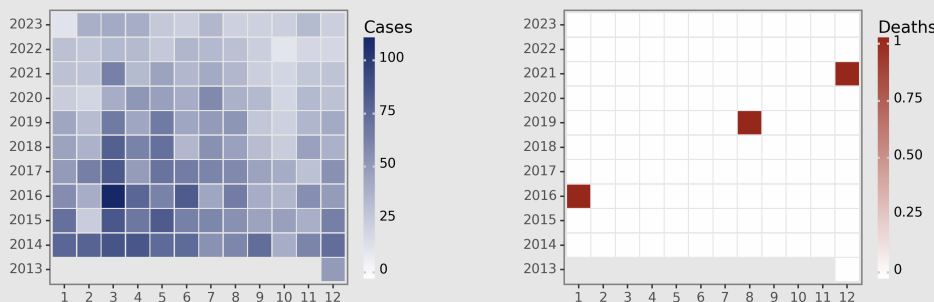
Cases Analysis

The data reveals a steady presence of leprosy cases in the Chinese mainland from December 2013 through December 2023, with no substantial outbreaks. The monthly case numbers fluctuate, peaking at 108 cases in March 2016 and reaching a low of 13 in October 2022. This indicates consistent reporting with possibly improved case finding or diagnostic facilities over time, reflecting minor changes but no significant trends or outbreaks. The overall stability of case numbers suggests effective maintenance of leprosy control programs and surveillance in the region.

Deaths Analysis

Leprosy-associated mortality in this dataset is extremely low, with only two reported deaths over the ten-year span—one in January 2016 and another in December 2021. This low mortality rate may be indicative of early detection and the availability of treatments that prevent complications, such as multidrug therapy (MDT), which is known to be highly effective. The data could also suggest good access to healthcare services for the affected individuals, along with successful public health interventions to manage the disease and prevent deaths related to leprosy.

Distribution



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