

Chinese Notifiable Infectious Diseases Surveillance Project

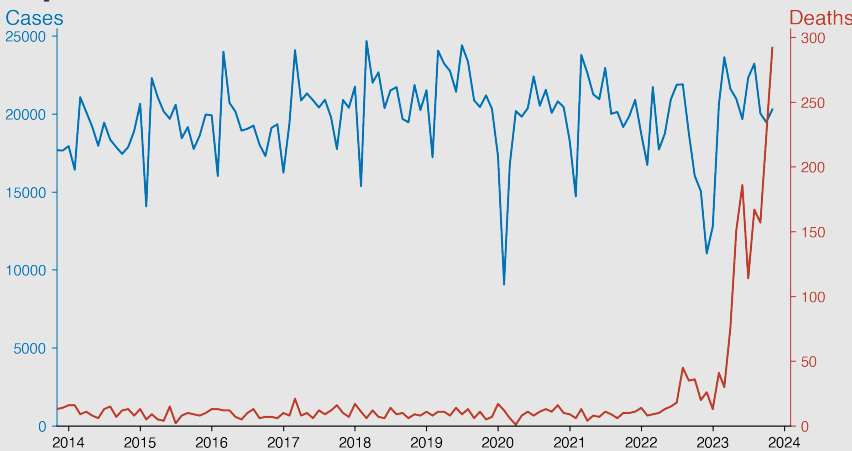
Hepatitis C

November 2023

Introduction

Hepatitis C is a viral infection that primarily affects the liver, leading to both acute and chronic liver diseases. It's caused by the Hepatitis C virus (HCV), transmitted through direct contact with infected human blood. The infection often shows no symptoms in its early stages but can eventually lead to severe liver damage, liver cancer, or cirrhosis. An estimated 71 million people globally have chronic HCV infection. There's no vaccine for Hepatitis C, but it can be cured with antiviral medicines that can eliminate the virus from the body and prevent liver damage.

Temporal Trend



Highlights

- Marked increase in Hepatitis C-related fatalities from June 2023, with a November peak (292 deaths) not mirrored by a rise in cases.
- Hepatitis C case numbers relatively stable in 2023 (ranging from 19,466 to 23,226), following annual fluctuations between 11,050 and 24,666 from 2010 to 2022.
- The death toll climbed sharply from April (76 deaths) to November 2023, indicating a severe uptrend in lethality.
- The growing case-fatality ratio in latter 2023 points to potential changes in disease virulence, reporting practices, or healthcare system challenges.

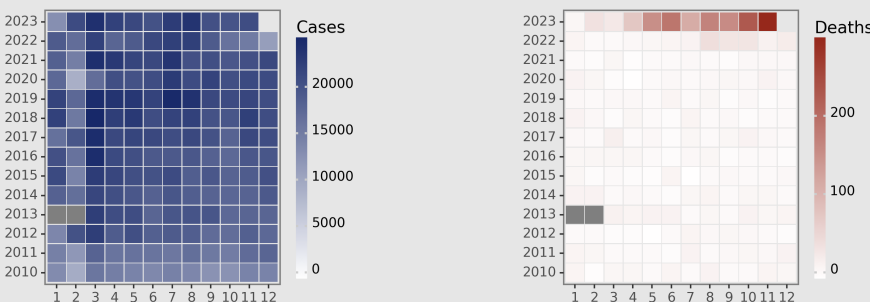
Cases Analysis

Since 2010, Hepatitis C cases in Chinese Mainland have shown fluctuations. While the early years recorded cases around 13,000 to 20,000 per month, there have been notable peaks, sometimes exceeding 24,000. The year 2020 showed a significant dip in February, likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic affecting healthcare services and case reporting. A steady increase resumes post-2020, with cases hovering between 18,000 and 24,000. Notably, recent months of 2023 depict a slight decrease in the number of cases compared to the high numbers seen in 2022.

Deaths Analysis

Hepatitis C-related deaths remained relatively low from 2010 to 2021, ranging from single to low double digits per month. However, a dramatic increase in mortalities is observed in 2022, spiking significantly in August and continuing to rise considerably through to November 2023. The surge in deaths from mid-2022 could indicate a potential crisis, perhaps due to evolving viral strains, increased virulence, healthcare system challenges, or changes in reporting practices, warranting urgent investigation and intervention.

Distribution



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