Chinese Notifiable Infectious Diseases Surveillance Report

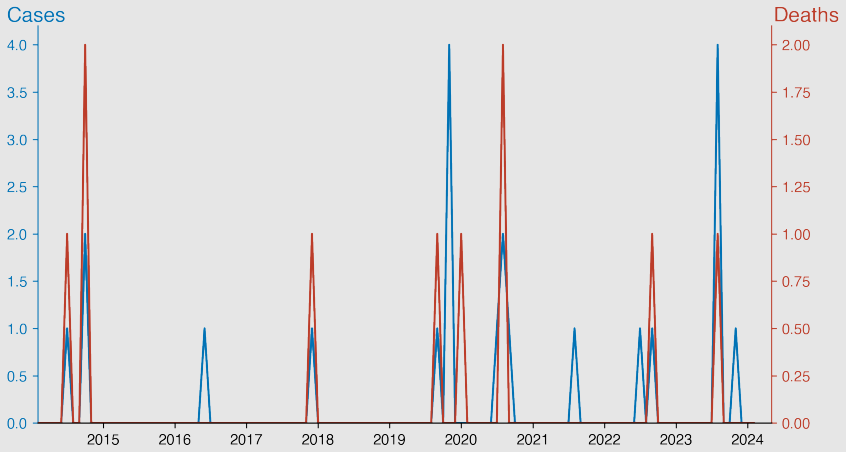
Plague

February 2024

Introduction

Plague is an infectious disease caused by the bacterium Yersinia pestis. It primarily affects rodents but can spread to other animals and humans through fleas that have bitten infected animals. Human plague infections continue to occur in rural areas and are found primarily in Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Plague is infamous for causing severe epidemics throughout history, including the Black Death that wiped out a significant portion of Europe's population in the 14th century. There are three main forms of human plague: bubonic, septicemic, and pneumonic, each presenting with different symptoms and levels of severity.

Temporal Trend



Highlights

- Plague in the Chinese mainland displays sporadic occurrences from 2014 to 2023 with a total of 18 reported cases and 9 deaths.
- The cases are distributed irregularly with occasional spikes such as November 2019 (4 cases, 0 deaths) and August 2023 (4 cases, 1 death), suggesting episodic outbreaks.
- The fatality ratio seems relatively high when cases are reported; however, large periods with no cases are observed, indicating a possible effective surveillance and rapid containment system.
- As of February 2024, no new cases or deaths have been reported, suggesting currently stable control of the disease within the mainland.

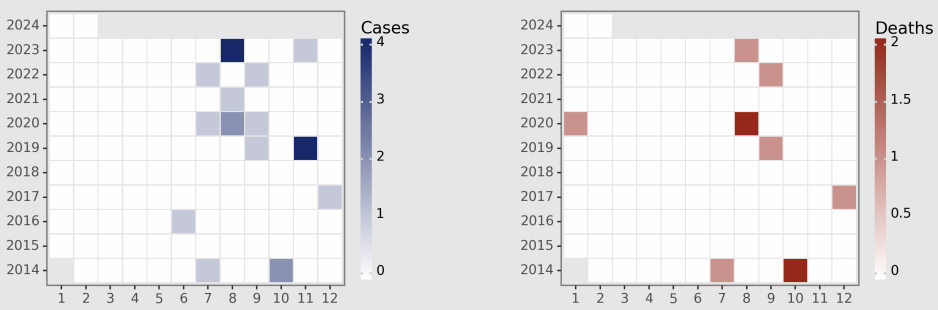
Cases Analysis

From 2014 to 2024, reported cases of plague in the Chinese mainland showed sporadic occurrences without a sustained or widespread outbreak. A total of 14 cases were documented, occurring singularly or in a small cluster, with no more than four cases reported in a single month. The majority of years had zero reported cases, indicating either successful containment and prevention measures or under-reporting of cases.

Deaths Analysis

Out of the 16 reported cases over 10 years, nine deaths were recorded, indicating a high case-fatality ratio (>50%). Highest deaths (2) were observed in October 2014 and August 2020, concurrently with case occurrence. Interestingly, a death was reported in January 2020, despite no reported case in the same month. This could suggest late reporting or a prolonged disease course from a case in the previous month. The significant fatality rate underscores the importance of prompt diagnosis and treatment to reduce plague-associated mortality.

Distribution



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