

Chinese Notifiable Infectious Diseases Surveillance Report

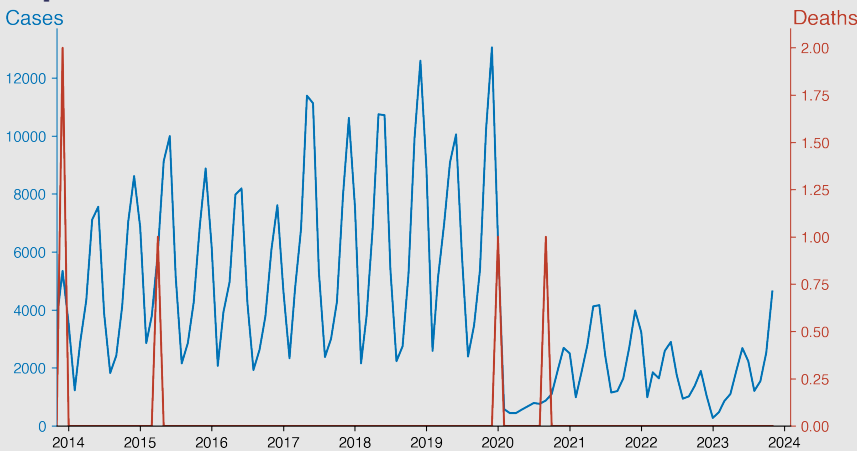
Scarlet fever

November 2023

Introduction

Scarlet fever, also known as scarlatina, is an infectious disease caused by Group A Streptococcus bacteria. This bacterial infection primarily affects children and exhibits symptoms such as a characteristic rash, high fever, sore throat, and flushed face. The rash typically feels like sandpaper and begins on the chest and abdomen before spreading. A distinguishing feature is strawberry tongue, where the tongue appears red and bumpy. Scarlet fever is highly contagious, spreading through respiratory droplets, and its complications include kidney disease or rheumatic fever if left untreated. Prompt antibiotic treatment is typically effective in managing the disease.

Temporal Trend



Highlights

- Scarlet fever in Chinese mainland showed a significant peak in incidence around June each year, with the highest recorded numbers in June 2011 (9,773 cases) and June 2018 (10,716 cases).
- A notable drop in cases occurred in 2020, coinciding with global COVID-19 response measures, suggesting a possible impact of infection control practices on scarlet fever transmission.
- The first recorded death occurred in July 2011, with very few fatalities overall, indicating a low case-fatality rate for scarlet fever in this region during the observed period.
- As of November 2023, cases have increased to 4,637, following the seasonal upward trend, but remain profoundly lower compared to peak years before 2020.

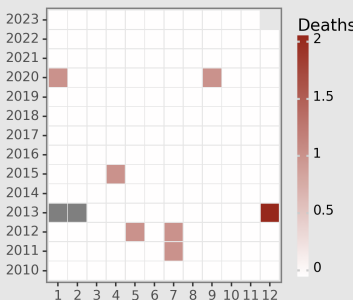
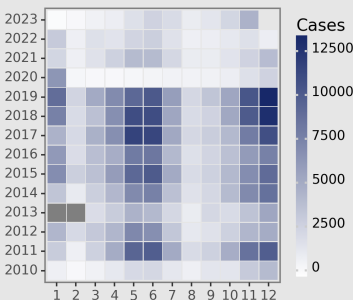
Cases Analysis

Between January 2010 and November 2023, there was a notable overall uptrend in scarlet fever cases in mainland China. Cases increased from 925 in January 2010 to a peak of 13,053 in December 2019. Seasonality is evident, with spikes generally occurring around May through July, coinciding with late spring and summer; however, a significant drop occurred in 2020, possibly due to public health interventions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Following 2020, the cases resumed an increasing trend, though not reaching pre-pandemic peaks.

Deaths Analysis

Despite the increase in scarlet fever cases over the observed period, deaths remained remarkably low, totaling five across all reported months. The first death was reported in July 2011, followed by solitary deaths in May and July 2012, January 2020, and September 2020. This low mortality rate suggests effective management and treatment of scarlet fever cases in China, although it also underscores the importance of continuous monitoring and prevention strategies to maintain control of the disease.

Distribution



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Version: 2024-01-04 (UTC+)

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