

Chinese Notifiable Infectious Diseases Surveillance Report

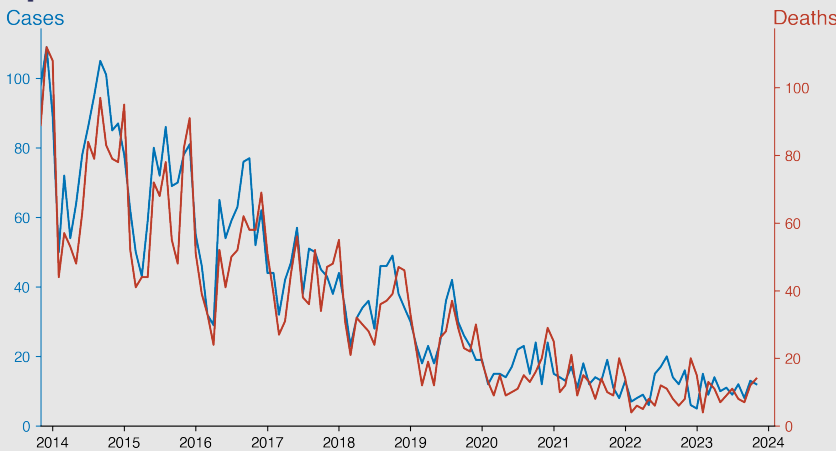
Rabies

November 2023

Introduction

Rabies is a zoonotic viral disease transmitted to humans through the bite or scratch of an infected animal, primarily dogs. The virus impacts the central nervous system, leading to disease in the brain and eventual death. Symptoms include fever, delirium, uncontrolled excitement, and fear of water. Despite being preventable with vaccination, rabies causes approximately 59,000 deaths annually worldwide. Post-bite vaccination is effective if administered promptly, but there's no known treatment once symptoms appear. Without immediate care, the disease is nearly always fatal.

Temporal Trend



Highlights

- Overall declining trend in both rabies cases and deaths from 2013 to 2023, with periodic fluctuations.
- Notable decrease in the number of cases from over 100 in the early years to around 10-20 in recent years, indicating improved control measures.
- Death-to-case ratio remains concerning, especially when spikes in deaths outnumber reported cases in certain months (e.g., December 2022, January 2023).
- The current situation as of November 2023 shows lower incidence (12 cases) compared to the beginning of the decade but a slight increase in mortality (14 deaths).

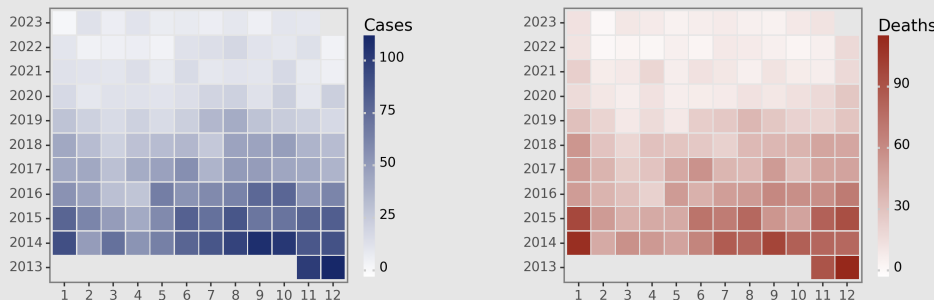
Cases Analysis

Between November 2013 and November 2023, reported rabies cases in Chinese mainland showed a decreasing trend, with initial figures around 100 cases per month dropping to single digits or low double digits in later years. Initially, cases fluctuated but maintained higher levels, especially from late 2013 to 2015. A more substantial decline began after 2016, marked by a consistent downturn in case numbers. Remarkably, from 2019 onwards, incidences stayed below 30 cases per month, indicating a successful reduction in disease transmission or improved reporting mechanisms.

Deaths Analysis

Deaths due to rabies in Chinese mainland paralleled the decline in cases over the reviewed period but with a notable characteristic—fatality counts occasionally surpassed the respective case counts in some months (e.g., December 2013, January and December 2020, December 2022), suggesting potential underreporting of cases or delayed diagnoses. The death toll was initially high but showed a significant decrease over time, particularly from 2016 onwards. The years following 2018 saw fewer than 30 fatalities per month, with a few peaks that might reflect outbreaks or improved diagnosis and death registration systems.

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