Chinese Notifiable Infectious Diseases Surveillance Report

Diphtheria

November 2023

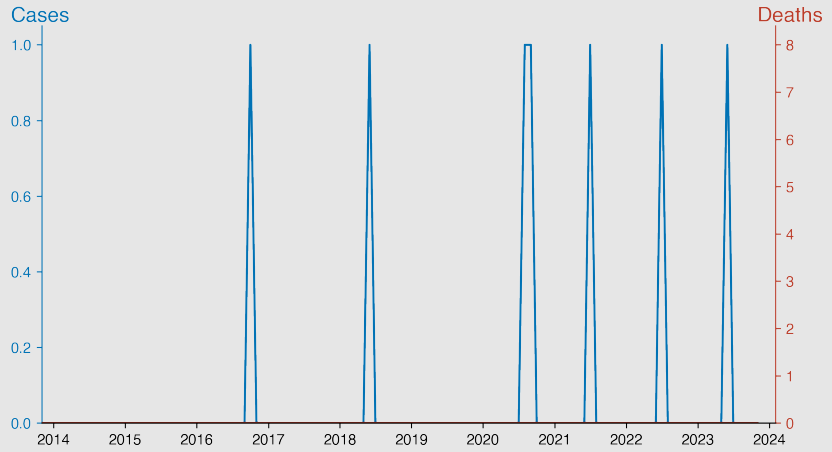
Introduction

Diphtheria is an infectious disease caused by the bacterium Corynebacterium diphtheriae. It primarily affects the throat and upper airways, often causing difficulty in breathing and swallowing. The bacteria produce a toxin that can damage the heart, nerves, and kidneys. Spread through respiratory droplets or contaminated objects, diphtheria typically presents with a sore throat, fever, and swollen glands. Although less common due to widespread immunization, untreated diphtheria can be fatal.

Highlights

Diphtheria cases in mainland China are extremely low over the period 2010-2023, with only sporadic incidents reported (a total of 7 cases).
- Incidence appears non-seasonal, with isolated case occurrences in 2011, 2016, 2018, 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023, primarily in June and August.
- 9 total deaths have been recorded from Diphtheria over the period - 8 in 2010 (no associated cases) and 1 in 2012, while there are no reported deaths post-2012.
- As of November 2023, there have been no reported cases or deaths from Diphtheria in mainland China. The disease situation remains stable and effectively controlled.

Temporal Trend



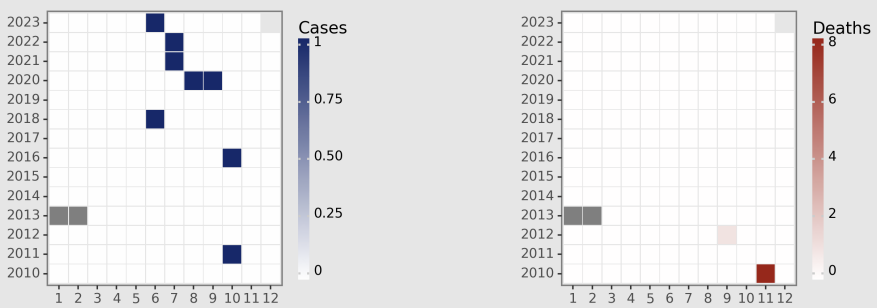
Cases Analysis

The data shows an exceptionally low occurrence of diphtheria in mainland China over the observed years, 2010 to 2023. There are occasional singular case reports, specifically in October 2011, October 2016, June 2018, August and September 2020, July 2021, July 2022, and June 2023. These incidents may indicate sporadic infections, which were effectively controlled, preventing them from causing broader outbreaks. The otherwise zero-case reports suggest effective immunization policies or natural immunity in the population, resulting in minor exposure or susceptibility to the disease.

Deaths Analysis

The death reports show an even more infrequent pattern. The majority of the observed periods report zero diphtheria-related deaths. Two instances deviate from this pattern: one in November 2010, where eight deaths are reported, possibly an uncontrolled local outbreak, and the second instance in September 2012 showing one case. The reduced mortality to almost none over the years reflects improved public health interventions, possibly including better healthcare access, effective patient management, and widespread immunization policies.

Distribution



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