Chinese Notifiable Infectious Diseases Surveillance Report

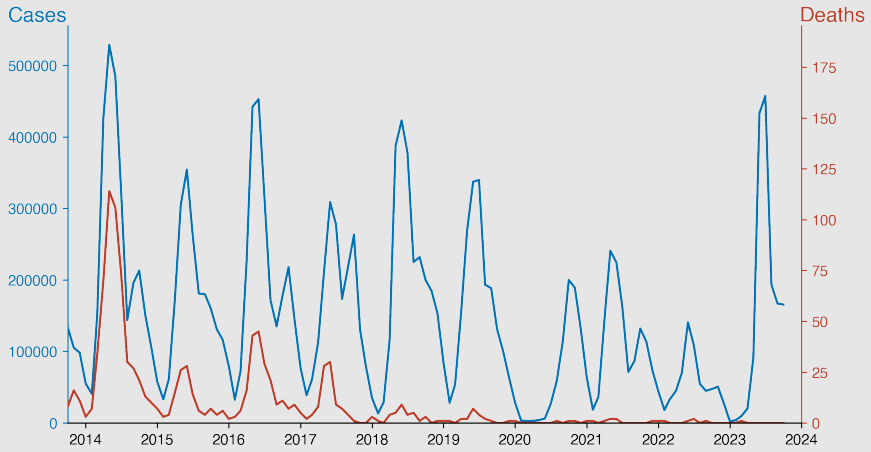
Hand foot and mouth disease

October 2023

Introduction

Hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD) is a contagious viral infection common in children and characterized by sores in the mouth and a rash on the hands and feet. It is most frequently caused by coxsackievirus A16 and enterovirus 71. HFMD spreads through contact with an infected person's nasal secretions, saliva, fluid from blisters, or stool. Symptoms include fever, reduced appetite, sore throat, and a feeling of being unwell, followed by painful sores in the mouth and a rash with blisters on hands, feet, and sometimes buttocks. It typically resolves on its own within 7-10 days.

Temporal Trend



Highlights

Seasonal peaks observed every year, with the highest number of cases typically occurring from May to July, suggesting a robust seasonality pattern for Hand foot and mouth disease (HFMD).
- A dramatic decrease in cases and deaths in 2020, potentially due to public health interventions for COVID-19 such as social distancing, which could have inadvertently impacted HFMD transmission.
- Post-2020, the number of cases gradually rebounded to pre-pandemic patterns by 2023, possibly due to relaxation of COVID-19 measures and resumption of normal activities.
- No reported deaths from HFMD in mainland China since the substantial decline in cases in 2020, indicating improved disease management or reporting.

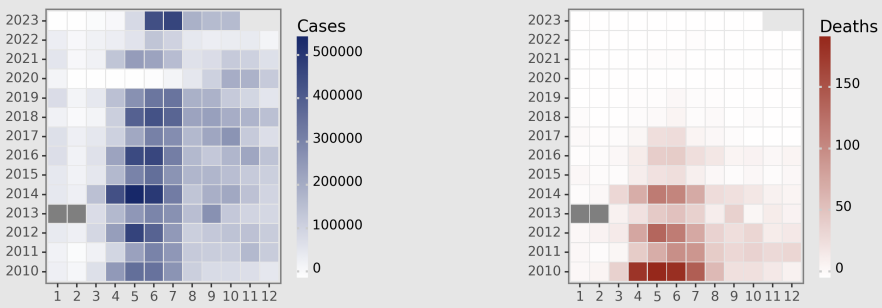
Cases Analysis

Hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD) cases in mainland China show notable seasonality with peaks in June and July, reflecting typical enterovirus transmission patterns. Starting in 2010 with substantial monthly variations, cases dramatically increased to over 300,000 during warm months, signaling conducive conditions for viral spread. Reported cases reached their zenith in 2014, followed by a general decline through 2019. A substantial drop in 2020 aligns with COVID-19 pandemic interventions, affecting HFMD incidence due to lockdowns and heightened hygiene practices. The uptrend resumes in 2021 and continues into 2023.

Deaths Analysis

Deaths associated with HFMD in China exhibit a generally decreasing trend over the years. The highest mortality was recorded in 2010, with a death count peaking at 186 in May. Subsequently, yearly peaks persist but with a lower frequency and magnitude, signaling improved disease management and possible increases in population immunity or virulence changes. The impressive reduction in deaths from 2020 onwards, with zero deaths in many months, likely corresponds to reduced transmission due to COVID-19 control measures and possibly improvements in healthcare. By 2023, HFMD-related mortality remains minimal, showing effective ongoing control and response efforts.

Distribution



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