

Chinese Notifiable Infectious Diseases Surveillance Report

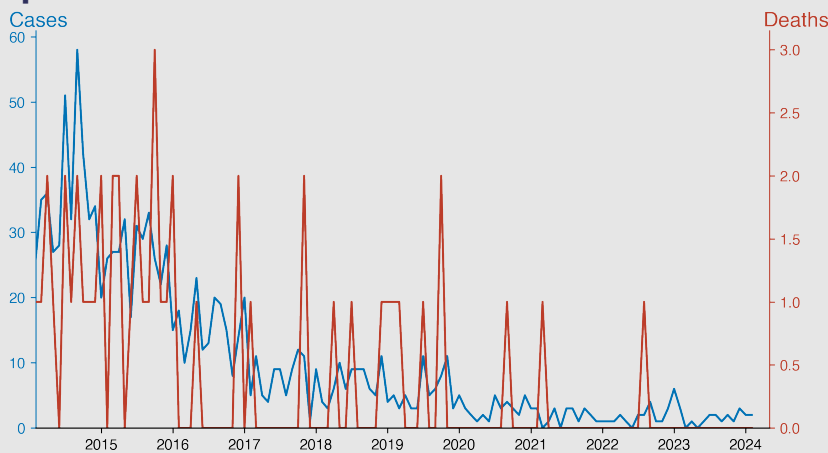
Neonatal tetanus

February 2024

Introduction

Neonatal tetanus is an acute, often fatal disease caused by the neurotoxin produced by *Clostridium tetani*, which enters the body through unsterile umbilical cord practices. This bacterial infection primarily affects newborns typically between 3 to 14 days after birth, when unhygienic conditions and contaminated instruments are used during delivery and cord care. Symptoms include muscle stiffness and spasms, inability to feed, and respiratory distress. Despite being preventable through maternal immunization and antiseptic practices, neonatal tetanus remains a significant health challenge in many low-income countries.

Temporal Trend



Highlights

- **Significant Decline in Cases:** Neonatal tetanus cases have dramatically decreased from 26 in February 2014 to 2 in February 2024, showing successful disease control.
- **Mortality Reduction:** Deaths have become rare, with many months reporting zero fatalities since 2020, highlighting improved healthcare outcomes.
- **Effective Public Health Interventions:** The consistent reduction in cases and deaths suggests that vaccination and hygiene initiatives have been effective.
- **Need for Continued Vigilance:** Occasional cases continue to appear, underlining the importance of maintaining preventive measures and surveillance.

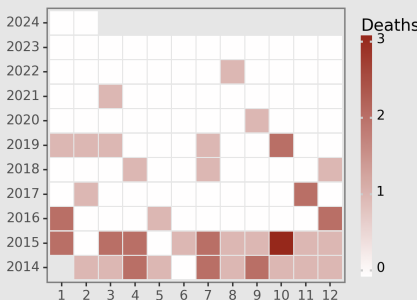
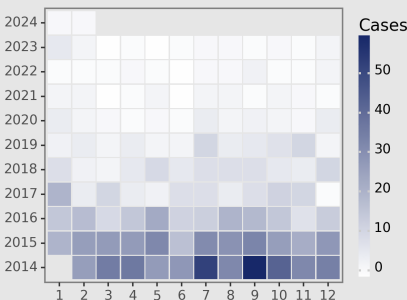
Cases Analysis

From 2014 to 2024, Chinese mainland reported a decreasing trend in neonatal tetanus cases. Initially, the number of monthly cases fluctuated, with a peak of 58 cases in September 2014. Over the years, a gradual decline is evident, with notably fewer cases per month from 2017 onwards. By 2023, the cases dwindled to single digits, often fewer than five, with no month exceeding six cases. This consistent reduction suggests effective intervention measures, such as improved maternal vaccination, antenatal care, and sterile birthing practices, significantly diminishing disease incidence.

Deaths Analysis

Neonatal tetanus deaths follow a similar decreasing trend, from 1-3 monthly deaths in 2014 down to none or very rare occurrences from 2020 onward. The fatality rate fluctuates, with no deaths reported in most months from 2016. This improvement implies successful enhancement in both preventive and clinical management aspects. While some months (e.g., 2015 October) reported higher mortality, the overall decline denotes long-term success in reducing neonatal mortality from tetanus.

Distribution



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