

Chinese Notifiable Infectious Diseases Surveillance Report

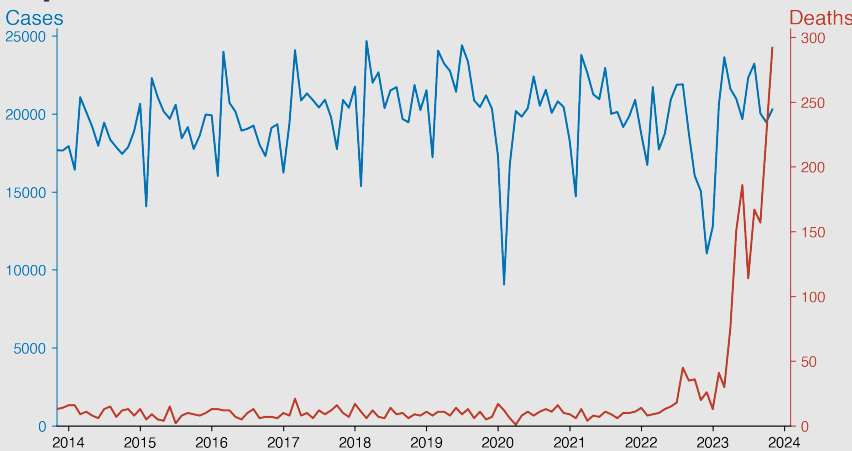
Hepatitis C

November 2023

Introduction

Hepatitis C is a viral infection causing inflammation in the liver, primarily spread through blood-to-blood contact. It often transitions to a chronic phase, potentially leading to severe complications like liver cancer or cirrhosis over many years. The hepatitis C virus (HCV) has different strains known as genotypes, which can influence treatment strategies. No vaccine is available for Hepatitis C; however, antiviral medications can cure most people of the virus. Symptoms, although often not visible in the early stages, may include fatigue, nausea, loss of appetite, and yellowing of the eyes and skin.

Temporal Trend



Highlights

- A notable increase in the Hepatitis C death rate is observed in 2023, with deaths in November (292) over tenfold higher than January (13).
- The number of cases since the initial data point (2010) broadly shows an upward trend, with fluctuations, culminating in relatively high case numbers in 2023.
- The trend in cases has occasional dips, most markedly in December 2022 with the lowest case count (11,050) observed since the beginning of the decade.
- The case-fatality ratio has substantially worsened in the latter half of 2023, suggesting potential changes in viral virulence, healthcare system strain, or reporting practices.

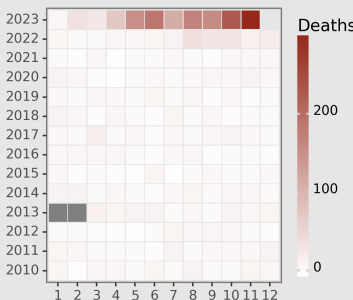
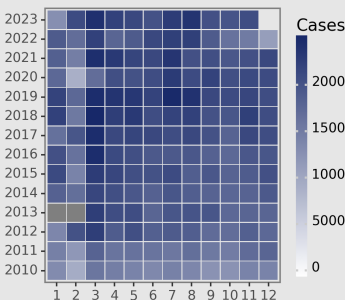
Cases Analysis

Hepatitis C cases in the Chinese mainland from January 2010 to November 2023 exhibit fluctuating yet generally increasing trends. Initial cases ranged between 9,594 to 15,716. A consistent annual increase is evident, with peaks often in March, suggesting possible seasonal patterns. 2022 saw a decline in reported cases from August, dipping to 11,050 in December, likely reflecting public health interventions. Cases rose again in 2023, starting at 12,785 in January and reaching a high of 23,626 in July, though decreasing slightly afterward.

Deaths Analysis

Deaths due to Hepatitis C initially showed minimal variation, ranging from 4 to 18 fatalities per month from January 2010 to 2022. A significant increase was observed starting in August 2022, with deaths escalating to 45 and further rising to 292 by November 2023. This alarming spike could indicate either an increase in virulence, reporting changes, a rise in co-infections, or healthcare system challenges. This trend necessitates urgent investigation and possible healthcare response to manage the increasing fatality rates.

Distribution



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