

Chinese Notifiable Infectious Diseases Surveillance Report

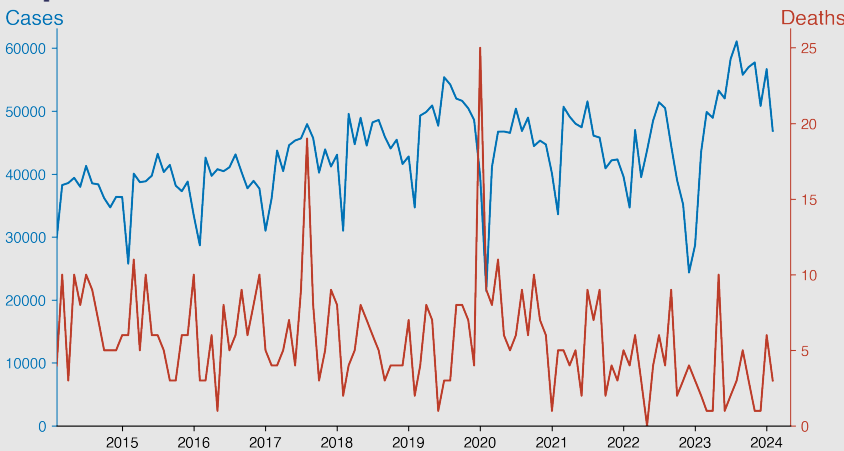
Syphilis

February 2024

Introduction

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection caused by the bacterium *Treponema pallidum*. Characterized by distinct stages, including primary, secondary, latent, and tertiary, it is spread through direct contact with a syphilitic sore during sexual activity or from mother to child during pregnancy. Initial symptoms may include a painless ulcer at the site of infection. If untreated, the disease can progress, leading to serious systemic effects and even death. Diagnosis is typically through blood tests, and treatment usually involves antibiotics like penicillin. Prevention includes safe sex practices and regular testing.

Temporal Trend



Highlights

1. Syphilis cases in Chinese mainland generally increase over time, peaking in the summer months, with the highest occurring in August 2023 (61068 cases).
2. Despite case fluctuations, related deaths remain relatively low, implying effective disease management or treatment.
3. As of 2024 February, the trajectory suggests an ongoing increase in cases but not proportional deaths.
4. With 46868 cases and 3 deaths in February 2024, prevention of transmission remains a substantial challenge.

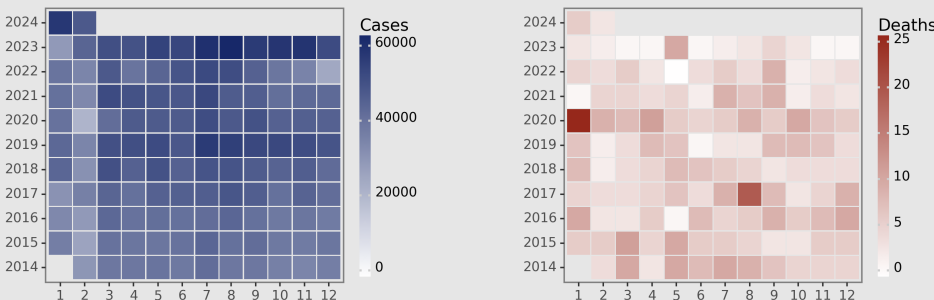
Cases Analysis

Since February 2014, Syphilis cases in Chinese mainland have shown a generally increasing trend, with occasional fluctuations. Notable peaks occur each year, typically in the middle and later months such as May, July, and August. The highest recorded case count appears in August 2023 at 61,068. A slight decline in cases can generally be observed towards the year-end. Furthermore, a significant dip occurred in February 2020, possibly due to the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on healthcare access and reporting. Lastly, case numbers have steadily increased from the start of 2023, indicating a potential worsening of the epidemic situation.

Deaths Analysis

Reported deaths due to syphilis fluctuated minimally between 2014 and 2024, with monthly deaths commonly in the single digits. A spike in January 2020 with 25 deaths is a clear outlier. Overall, deaths remained rare against the backdrop of increasing cases, suggesting improved treatment outcomes or underreporting of syphilis-associated mortality. The consistently low death rate throughout the decade indicates that while syphilis infections are prevalent, they are seldom directly fatal, possibly due to advances in detection and treatment protocols.

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Version: 2024-03-20 (UTC+)