

Chinese Notifiable Infectious Diseases Surveillance Report

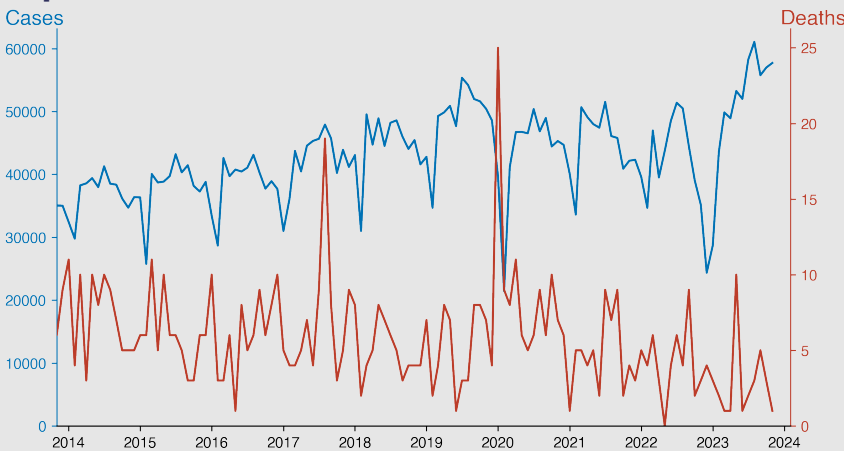
Syphilis

November 2023

Introduction

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by the bacterium *Treponema pallidum*. It develops in four stages: primary, secondary, latent, and tertiary, each with distinct symptoms. Transmission occurs primarily through direct contact during sexual activity, but can also be passed from mother to a child during pregnancy, leading to congenital syphilis. Although syphilis is curable with antibiotics in its early stages, if left untreated, it can result in serious health complications such as cardiovascular or neurological disorders. Proper use of protection and regular STI screenings are crucial preventative measures.

Temporal Trend



Highlights

- A steady increase in monthly syphilis cases from 25,577 in January 2010 to 57,719 in November 2023, indicating a persistent rise in infections over the 13-year period.
- The mortality associated with syphilis remained low, with deaths per month rarely exceeding 10, and dropping to just 1 death in November 2023, suggesting effective management and treatment protocols.
- The number of cases reached the highest monthly counts in the later years, with over 61,000 cases in August 2023, indicating a worsening outbreak or improved case detection.
- There was a notable dip in reported cases in February 2020, which may correlate with the global COVID-19 pandemic onset, potentially affecting sexual health services and reporting.

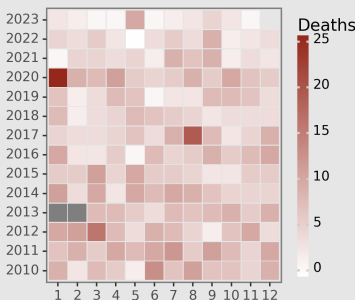
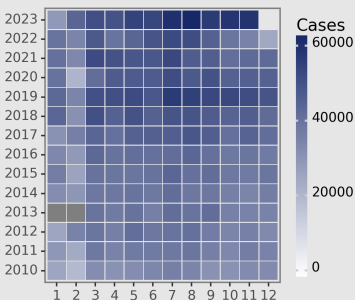
Cases Analysis

Analysis of syphilis cases from January 2010 to November 2023 in mainland China reveals an overall upward trend in infections. In 2010, cases averaged around 30,000 per month, with fluctuations likely reflecting seasonal variations or reporting inconsistencies. Cases rose steadily over the years, surpassing 50,000 cases per month by 2023. The peaks in July 2023 (58,247 cases) suggest possible periodic outbreaks or enhanced surveillance efforts. Data gaps in 2013 reflect missing reports which could skew year-on-year comparisons.

Deaths Analysis

Deaths attributed to syphilis remained low from January 2010 through November 2023, never exceeding 25 deaths per month with occasional spikes. The highest mortality reported was in January 2020 (25 deaths), which is anomalous compared to the overall pattern. These figures demonstrate a relatively stable but persistently present mortality rate despite the increasing trend in syphilis cases. The low fatality rate suggests effective treatment options are available, though continued vigilance is required to prevent and manage outbreaks.

Distribution



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