

# Chinese Notifiable Infectious Diseases Surveillance Project

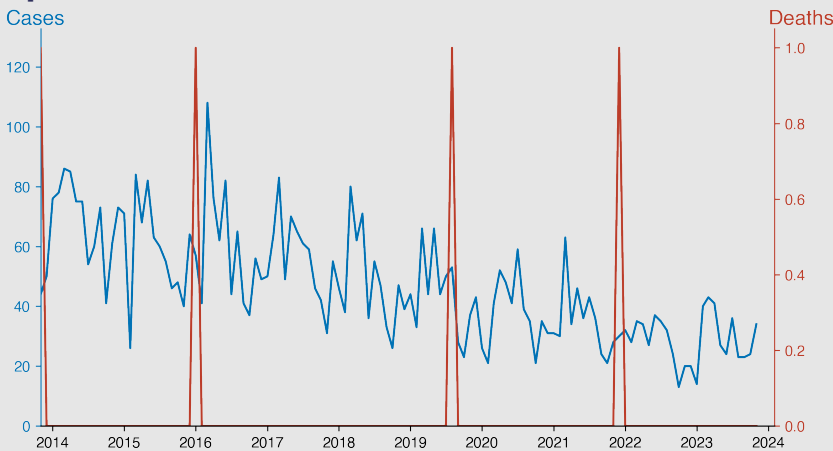
## Leprosy

November 2023

### Introduction

Leprosy, also known as Hansen's disease, is a chronic infectious disease caused by *Mycobacterium leprae*. The disease primarily affects the skin and peripheral nerves resulting in physical disfigurement and nerve damage. Leprosy is characterized by long incubation periods, typically five to seven years. Transmission often occurs through prolonged close contact with people afflicted by the disease. Not everyone exposed develops symptoms since susceptibility depends on the individual's immune response. With early diagnosis and multi-drug therapy (MDT), leprosy can be effectively treated and deformation prevented.

### Temporal Trend



### Highlights

- Leprosy cases in Mainland China have consistently decreased from a peak of 127 cases in March 2012 to 34 cases in November 2023, indicating a positive downward trend.
- Mortality is minimal, with occasional single monthly deaths throughout the years, signifying effective management of disease complications.
- The declining number of cases suggests successful control measures, though ongoing surveillance and preventive strategies are essential to sustain this progress and work towards eradication.
- Continuous monitoring remains crucial, as leprosy persists in the population albeit at reduced levels.

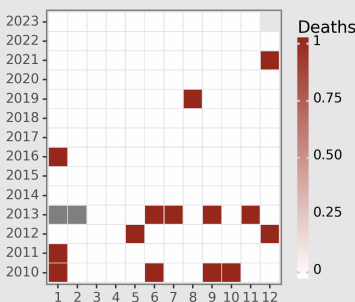
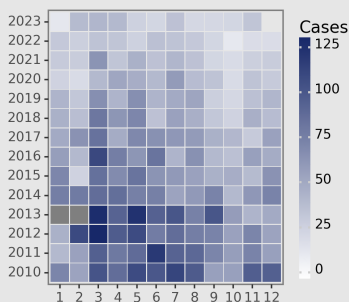
### Cases Analysis

From January 2010 to November 2023, mainland China reported a decreasing trend in leprosy cases. Initially, cases per month were commonly above 70, with occasional peaks above 100, like in March 2010 (101 cases) and March 2012 (127 cases). However, starting in 2018, cases dwindled, predominantly ranging between 20 and 40. Noteworthy, data for January and February 2013 are missing. Peaks and troughs suggest seasonality, with higher counts typically in March through June. The diminishing trend might imply effective public health interventions and early detection systems.

### Deaths Analysis

During the same period, leprosy-related deaths were extremely rare, with total fatalities not exceeding 1 per reported month. Most months registered zero deaths. The few instances of leprosy-related mortality were sporadic, without apparent seasonal patterns. This indicates either leprosy's low lethality or the success of treatment protocols. The consistent low death rate over the years, coupled with declining cases, suggests improved management and potential eradication efforts for leprosy in China.

### Distribution



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