

Chinese Notifiable Infectious Diseases Surveillance Report

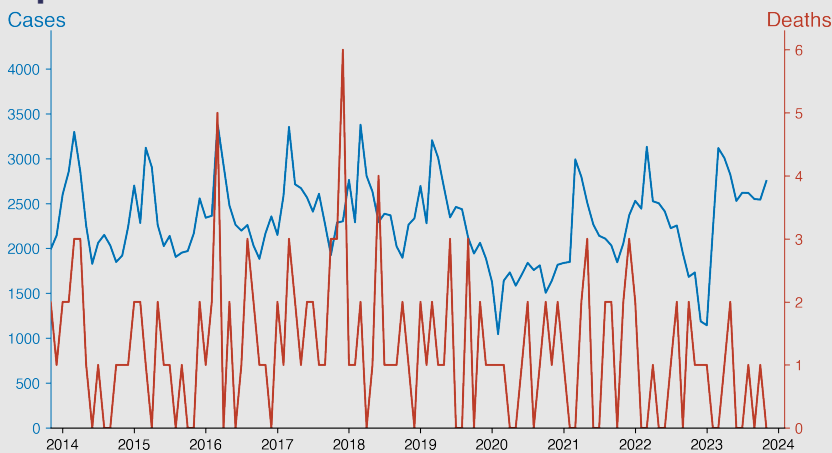
Hepatitis E

November 2023

Introduction

Hepatitis E is a liver disease caused by the Hepatitis E virus (HEV), primarily transmitted through the ingestion of contaminated water or food. Common in several developing countries, it poses significant health risks, particularly to pregnant women. Symptoms range from mild fever, abdominal pain, jaundice to severe liver failure. Although no specific treatment exists, good hygiene practices can significantly reduce its transmission.

Temporal Trend



Highlights

There is a steady decrease in the number of Hepatitis E cases from the peak in 2011 with sporadic cases in 2010, followed by a moderate increase post-2020, suggesting a potential recurrence of the disease.

2. Seasonal variation is observed, showing higher incidence rates during March to April, likely due to seasonal fluctuations in population behavior or the virus's lifecycle.

3. Despite fluctuations in case numbers, mortality rates remain substantially low, pointing towards effective control and treatment measures.

4. As of November 2023, a notable rise is seen in cases but without an increase in deaths, indicating an improved survival rate despite the potentially worsening outbreak.

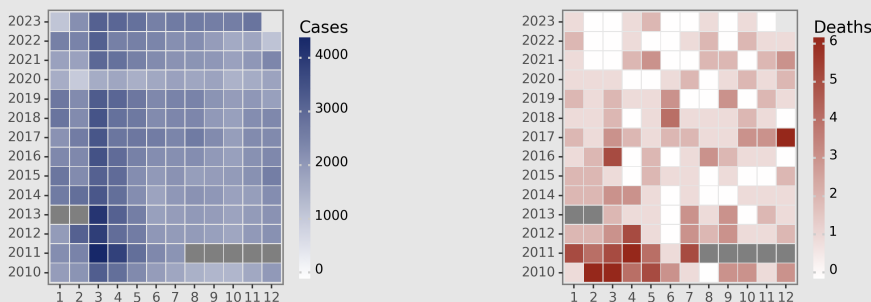
Cases Analysis

The reported cases of Hepatitis E in mainland China show variable monthly case counts over a span of 14 years. A trend of peaks generally observed in spring (March-April) and troughs, generally in late summer or fall, is noteworthy. This could be subjected to seasonal variations typical to Hepatitis E. By comparison, reported cases significantly reduced around February 2020 likely due to heightened hygiene practices and reduced human interactions amid COVID-19. However, in the post-pandemic era, from March 2021 onwards, the case count seems to be returning to pre-pandemic levels, indicating sustained transmission of Hepatitis E in mainland China.

Deaths Analysis

Death cases associated with Hepatitis E are generally low, rarely exceeding five per month over the examined period. This aligns with the fact that Hepatitis E is typically a self-limiting disease with low fatality, more so in regions with access to better healthcare infrastructures, such as mainland China. However, sporadic increase in deaths (e.g., December 2017, July 2016) calls for further investigations into potential risk factors that may increase disease severity. Overall, a pattern correlating fatalities and case peaks is not evident, underscoring the need for more focused research on disease progression and related mortality.

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