

Chinese Notifiable Infectious Diseases Surveillance Report

Hepatitis C

November 2023

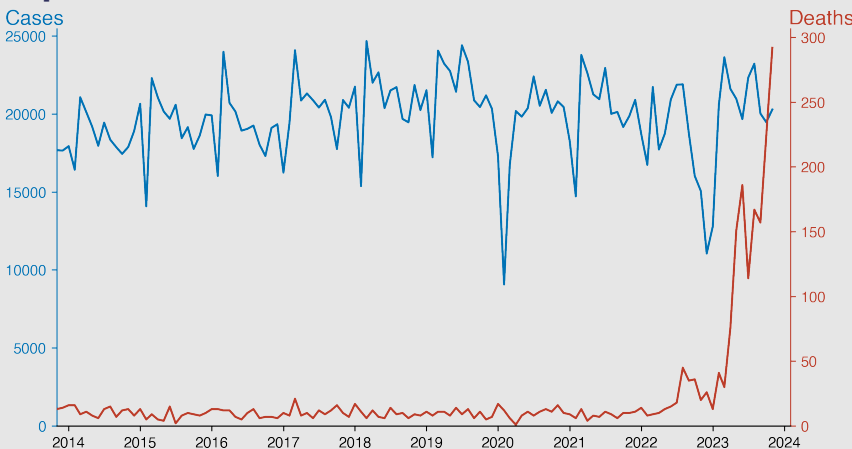
Introduction

Hepatitis C is a liver disease caused by the Hepatitis C virus (HCV). The infection is often asymptomatic but chronic infection can cause scarring of the liver, cirrhosis, liver cancer, or liver failure. The disease spreads through blood-to-blood contact, commonly from unclean needles or inadequate sterilization in medical settings, although it can also be transmitted via sexual contact or from mother to child during birth. There is no vaccine for Hepatitis C, but it is curable with a course of antiviral medicines.

Highlights

- A sharp rise in mortality observed since August 2022, culminating in 292 deaths by November 2023, yet case numbers remain steady.
- The fatality rate significantly increases from single-digit to triple-digit deaths within 15 months, signaling potential changes in disease dynamics or healthcare challenges.
- Noteworthy dip in cases to 11,050 in December 2022, but subsequent rebound suggests fluctuating transmission rates.
- The emerging trend of higher deaths in the face of consistent case numbers demands immediate attention to identify causative factors and implement corrective public health measures.

Temporal Trend



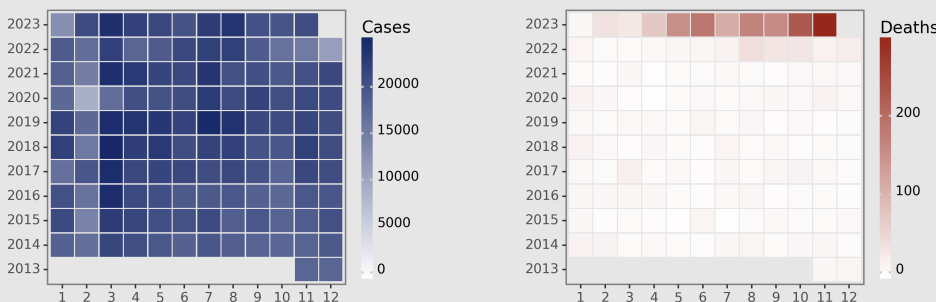
Cases Analysis

The Hepatitis C cases in Chinese mainland show fluctuations over a decade with periodic increases, such as in March annually. A notable spike appears in March 2023 with 23,625 cases. The lowest recorded cases are in December 2022 (11,050 cases). There is a trend of case surges typically in the first and second quarters of the year, with potential seasonal influences or reporting anomalies. Since 2020, there's a slight decline in cases which could be associated with the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on healthcare access and reporting. Word count: 100

Deaths Analysis

Initially, deaths due to Hepatitis C remained relatively stable, with a single-digit to low double-digit monthly mortality. However, starting in August 2022, a stark increase in fatalities is observed, culminating in a high of 292 deaths in November 2023. The period from 2022 to 2023 is marked by a significantly escalated mortality rate, suggesting potential changes in the virus's virulence, healthcare practices, population health, or an alteration in the reporting system. Word count: 87

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Version: 2024-01-07 (UTC+)