Chinese Notifiable Infectious Diseases Surveillance Report

Tuberculosis

December 2023

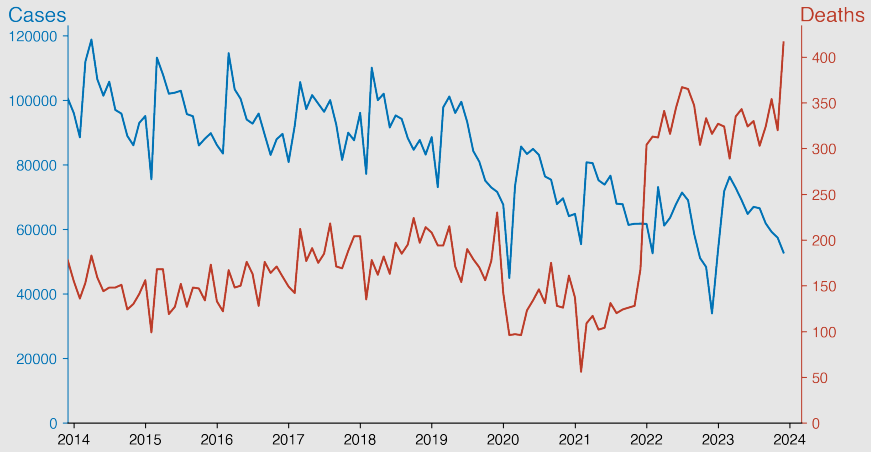
Introduction

Tuberculosis (TB) is a potentially serious infectious disease that predominantly affects the lungs. It is caused by the bacterium Mycobacterium tuberculosis. The disease is spread from person to person through microscopic droplets released into the air via coughs and sneezes. Most cases remain latent, showing no symptoms, but active TB can be fatal if not treated properly. TB's symptoms include cough, fatigue, fever, night sweats, and weight loss. Despite being a preventable and curable disease, TB remains a significant global health issue.

Highlights

- Tuberculosis cases in China have steadily declined from 100,685 in December 2013 to 52,826 in December 2023, showing effective control measures.
- Despite the fall in cases, TB deaths have worryingly surged to 416 in December 2023 from 178 in December 2013, suggesting challenges in disease management.
- Seasonal trends show case peaks in March, followed by end-of-year declines, indicating potential seasonality in transmission.
- Rising mortality rates amid reducing incidence highlight the urgent need for enhanced treatment protocols and better healthcare delivery.

Temporal Trend



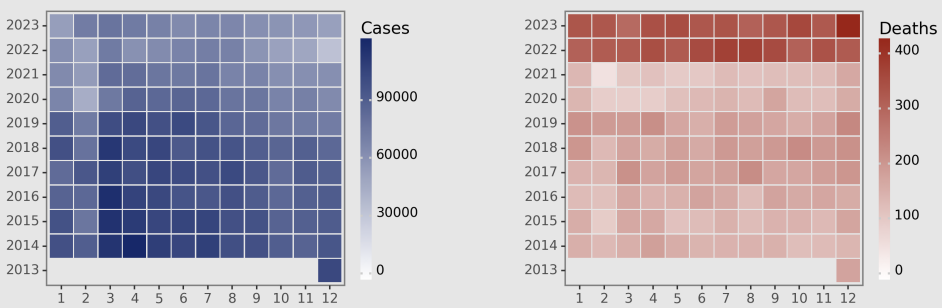
Cases Analysis

From December 2013 to December 2023, Tuberculosis cases in China exhibited a general downward trend with periodic spikes, typically observed in March each year, aligning with seasonal trends. Noticeably, a significant drop occurred in February 2020, corresponding with the COVID-19 pandemic onset, which continued, albeit to a lesser extent, through 2021 to 2023. Although cases partially rebounded in subsequent years, they never returned to pre-pandemic levels, indicating potential long-term effects of COVID-19 on disease surveillance or reporting.

Deaths Analysis

The number of Tuberculosis-related deaths fluctuated without a clear long-term trend until 2022, which saw an abrupt rise leading to the highest recorded deaths in December 2023. While the case fatality rate (deaths relative to cases) remained relatively stable in the early years, it notably increased from 2022 onwards. This may suggest issues such as reduced access to healthcare, changes in healthcare-seeking behavior post-COVID-19, the emergence of drug-resistant TB strains, or other healthcare system strains affecting TB outcomes.

Distribution



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