

Chinese Notifiable Infectious Diseases Surveillance Report

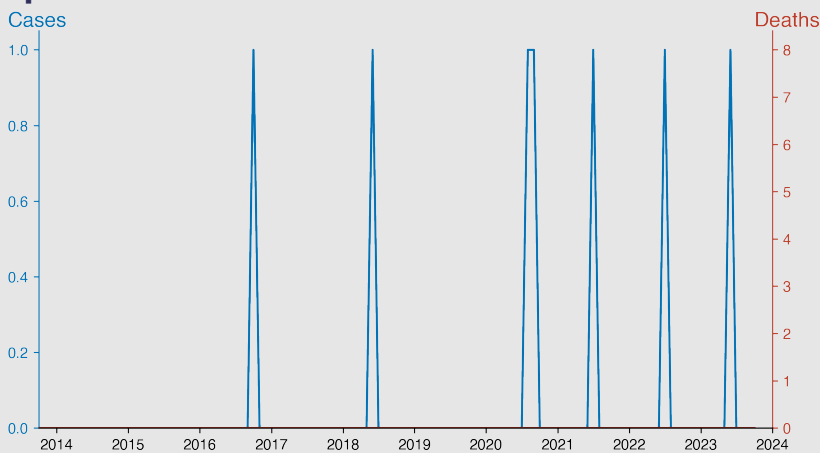
Diphtheria

October 2023

Introduction

Diphtheria is a serious bacterial infection caused by *Corynebacterium diphtheriae*. It spreads through respiratory droplets from coughing or sneezing. Symptoms include a sore throat, fever, swollen glands, and characteristic thick, gray coating on the throat or nose. If not treated, it can produce a toxin harming the heart, kidneys, and nerves. Vaccination is the best prevention. Diphtheria was once a common cause of death in children, but now it is rare in countries where vaccinations are routinely administered, though it may still be encountered in some regions with limited healthcare access.

Temporal Trend



Highlights

Diphtheria remains rare in mainland China, with sporadic cases rather than sustained transmission or outbreaks.

- Since 2010, only a few cases have been reported, and they are not associated with any fatalities, suggesting effective case management and disease control efforts.
- A singular case was recorded in June 2023, aligning with the pattern of isolated occurrences seen annually in the previous years.
- Despite low incidence, the persistent presence of diphtheria cases emphasizes the importance of continued vaccination and surveillance.

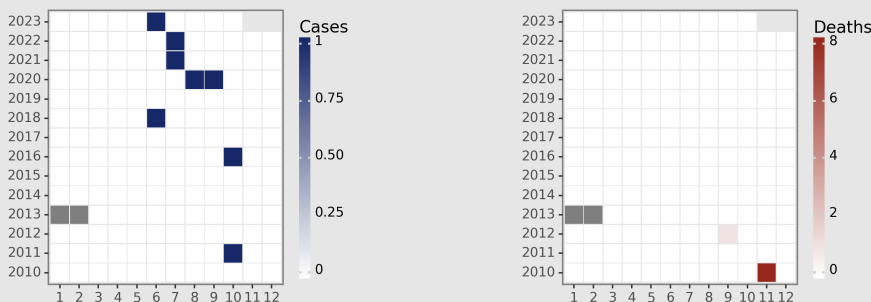
Cases Analysis

Between January 2010 and October 2023, the reported cases of diphtheria in mainland China were minimal, with occurrences recorded in only six isolated incidents (November 2010, October 2011, June 2018, August and September 2020, July 2021, July 2022, and June 2023). Each of these instances cited only a single case, for a total of seven reported cases during this extensive period. The sporadic nature of these cases, combined with the prolonged intervals of zero incidences, suggests an effective control and prevention strategy, likely due to widespread vaccination and robust public health measures.

Deaths Analysis

Analyzing the death data associated with diphtheria from January 2010 to October 2023 in mainland China reveals a remarkably low mortality rate. Out of the seven reported cases, only one resulted in a fatality, which occurred in September 2012. The almost nonexistent death records over these years reflect either a high level of effective clinical management for diagnosed cases or the possibility of underreporting. Nonetheless, it suggests that diphtheria is relatively well-contained in China, which could be attributed to the successful implementation of vaccination programs, particularly the DTP (diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis) vaccine.

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