Chinese Notifiable Infectious Diseases Surveillance Project
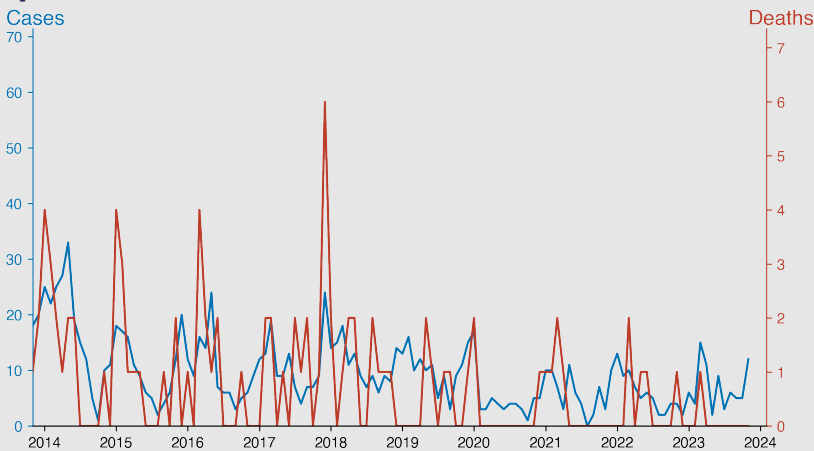
Meningococcal meningitis
November 2023

Introduction

Meningococcal meningitis is a bacterial form of meningitis, a serious infection of the meninges that affects the brain membrane. It can cause severe brain damage and is fatal in 50% of cases if untreated. The disease is transmitted through respiratory droplets or throat secretions from infected persons. It mainly affects children and young adults living in close quarters, such as college dormitories or army recruits. The bacteria Neisseria meningitidis is the primary cause and there are vaccines available to prevent some types of the disease.

Highlights

- A decreasing trend in the number of cases and deaths due to Meningococcal meningitis is observed from 2010 to 2023.
- A significant reduction in cases begins around 2015, which is sustained through to the last data point in November 2023.
- Despite occasional fluctuations, by 2023, both cases and fatalities stabilize at low levels with no deaths reported since January 2023.
- The data for March and April tend to show higher case counts compared to other months, suggesting a possible seasonal pattern.
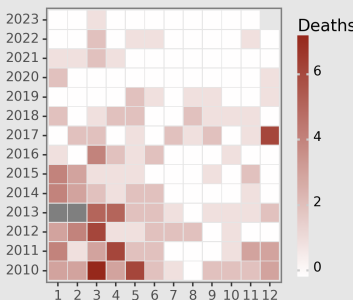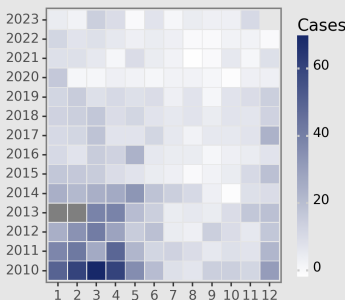
Temporal Trend

Cases Analysis

Analysis of the Chinese mainland Meningococcal meningitis data from 2010 to 2023 shows a declining trend in reported cases. Peaks up to 68 cases can be seen in the earlier years (2010 March), with a noticeable reduction to single digits by 2023. Seasonal patterns are not apparent, with the highest case counts dispersed across different months annually. Missing data for 2013 January and February may slightly skew the year-to-year comparison. Despite fluctuations, there is a general shift towards lower case counts, signifying improved control over time.

Deaths Analysis

The mortality data associated with Meningococcal meningitis in the Chinese mainland over the same period indicates a significant decrease in fatalities. Death counts peaked at 7 in March 2010, with a marked drop in subsequent years, stabilizing at 0 to 2 deaths per month. No fatalities are reported for several months in more recent years, with no deaths observed throughout the entire year of 2023 up to November. The decreasing trend in deaths suggests effective case management and possibly improved vaccination strategies or public health interventions.

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