

Chinese Notifiable Infectious Diseases Surveillance Report

Hand foot and mouth disease

November 2023

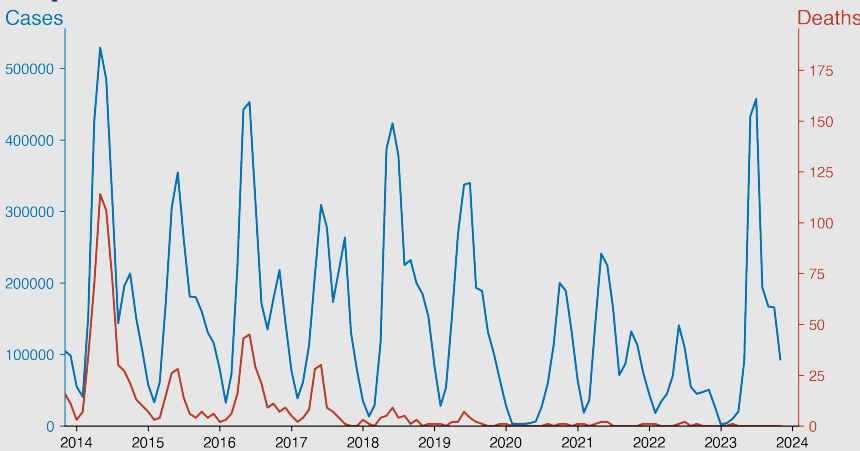
Introduction

Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease (HFMD) is a highly contagious illness caused primarily by the Coxsackievirus. It typically affects children under 5 years old, but anyone can be susceptible. Characterized by blisters or sores in the mouth and a rash on the hands and feet, HFMD often comes with fever, sore throat, and a feeling of being unwell. Spread through close personal contact, the air from coughing or sneezing, infected feces, or contact with infected surfaces, the disease typically resolves on its own within 7 to 10 days.

Highlights

- Seasonal peaks in Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease (HFMD) are observed in May and June over several years, with a notable decline in the colder months.
- A significant reduction in cases is evident starting from 2020, which could potentially be a result of public health interventions for COVID-19 such as enhanced hygiene measures and social distancing.
- The fatality rate has seen a noticeable decrease over time, reaching zero deaths per month since November 2022, indicating improvements in disease management and response.
- The latest available data for November 2023 shows a continuation of the low transmission season, with 92,955 reported cases and no deaths, maintaining the trend of no reported fatalities.

Temporal Trend



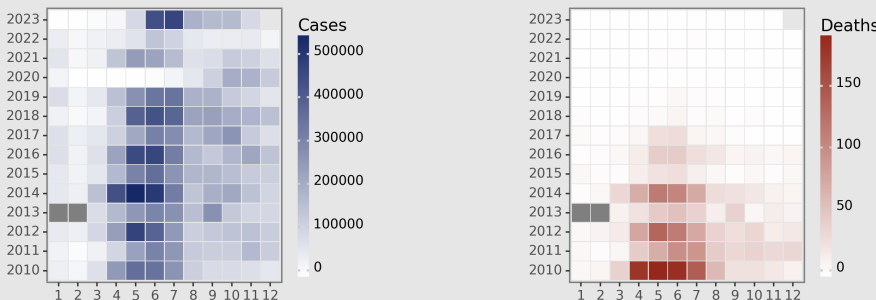
Cases Analysis

Hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD) shows a marked seasonality, with cases peaking from April to July each year, indicative of a possible environmental influence on transmission, aligning with regional temperature and humidity patterns. The pronounced peak in May and June suggests enhanced viral activity or increased social contact among children. Drops in 2020 align with COVID-19 interventions, reflecting the impact of public health measures like social distancing and school closures on infectious diseases with similar transmission mechanisms.

Deaths Analysis

Fatalities from HFMD are rare, but they exhibit a similar seasonal trend as cases, with higher deaths occurring in the May-July period. The highest mortality was reported in May 2010, which saw 186 deaths, suggesting a particularly virulent strain or co-circulating viruses. Noteworthy is the sharp drop in fatalities starting from 2020, possibly as a byproduct of stringent health policies targeting the COVID-19 pandemic, which might have inadvertently suppressed HFMD spread and related fatalities.

Distribution



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