Chinese Notifiable Infectious Diseases Surveillance Report

Anthrax

March 2024

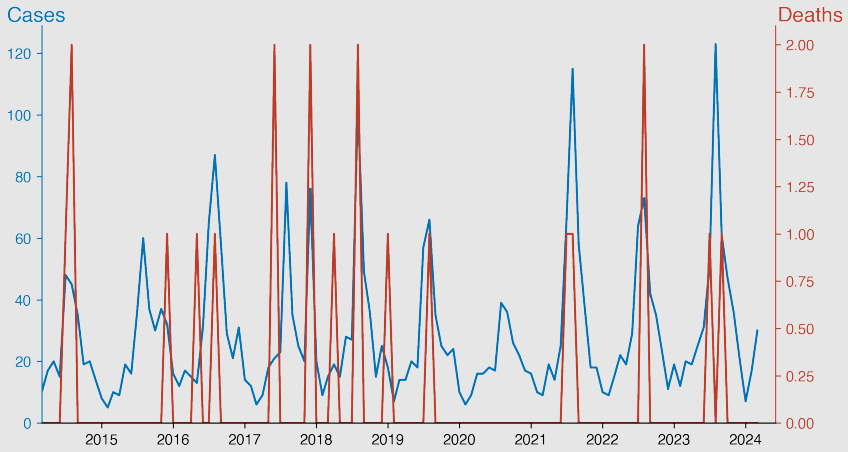
Introduction

Anthrax is an acute disease caused by the bacterium Bacillus anthracis, primarily affecting livestock and wild game. Humans can become infected through direct or indirect contact with sick animals, or by exposure to anthrax spores used as a biological weapon. The disease manifests in three forms: cutaneous, inhalation, and gastrointestinal. Symptoms vary based on the type but may include skin ulcers, difficulty breathing, and severe diarrhea. Anthrax is a serious global health concern, but early detection and treatment can improve survival rates.

Highlights

- A recurring seasonal trend in Anthrax cases is evident in China, peaking in summer (July and August), with cases in recent years surpassing 100 in peak months.
- Despite fluctuations, the highest yearly cases are increasing, with a record 123 cases (August 2023) to date.
- Most months see no deaths, though occasional instances peak at two in certain months.
- As of March 2024, there are 30 cases, no deaths; higher than previous years' March data, reflecting an off-season spike.

Temporal Trend



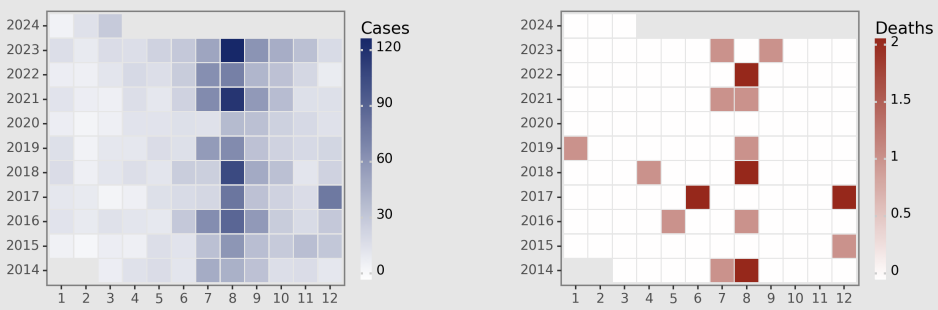
Cases Analysis

From 2014 to 2024, Anthrax case numbers in mainland China generally show a seasonal pattern with an increase in the summer and a decrease in the winter. There is also an upward trend of cases over the years, with some peak reporting of cases in August of 2018, 2021, and 2023. Despite the overall trend, the number of cases fluctuates in some years such as a drop in 2020, possibly related to the pandemic's impact on routine surveillance and reporting.

Deaths Analysis

Despite the relatively high number of reported Anthrax cases, death rates remain comparatively low. Deaths due to Anthrax are sporadic, with 16 reported instances over a span of 10 years. There is no discernable recurrent monthly pattern in the death rates; however, most deaths appear to occur in the months with huge case numbers, specifically July, August and December. An increasing trend in deaths is not observed within the covered period. Crucially, even in the months with the highest recorded cases, the number of deaths did not exceed two.

Distribution



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