

Chinese Notifiable Infectious Diseases Surveillance Report

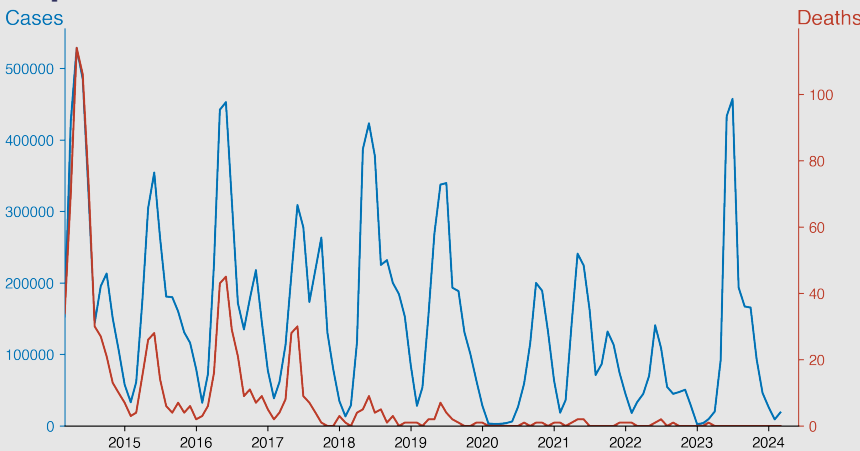
Hand foot and mouth disease

March 2024

Introduction

Hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD) is a contagious illness primarily affecting children. It is caused by various viruses, predominantly the Coxsackie A16 virus. Symptoms include fever, blisters in the mouth, and rash on the hands and feet. The disease spreads through direct contact with bodily fluids or contaminated surfaces. While uncomfortable, HFMD is typically mild and resolves on its own within a week to ten days. Serious complications are rare, but can occur. There is no specific treatment, and prevention measures include proper personal hygiene.

Temporal Trend



Highlights

- As of March 2024, Hand Foot and Mouth Disease (HFMD) cases in mainland China are 18,840, a massive decrease from the peak of 457,212 in July 2023.
- Deaths have remained at zero since April 2023, suggesting effective disease management.
- Data reveals a cyclical pattern with case numbers peaking mid-year and decreasing at year start and end.
- A steep decline in cases begins in 2020, partially rebounds in 2023, yet remains lower compared to pre-2020.

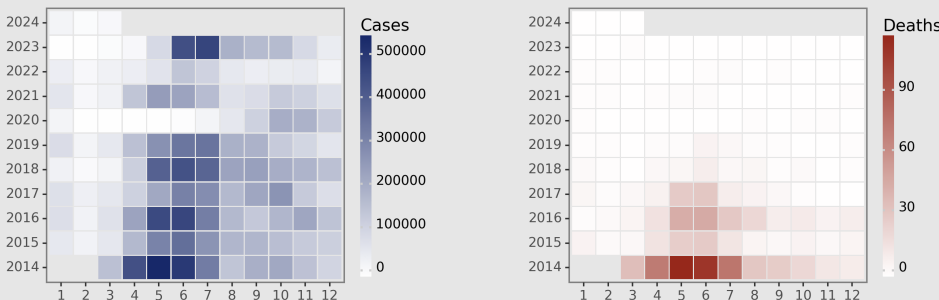
Cases Analysis

Hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD) in Chinese mainland exhibits a marked seasonal pattern, with cases peaking between April and July each year. The case numbers range from tens of thousands in winter months to hundreds of thousands during the peak season. However, a sharp decrease in the reported cases was seen in 2020, which might be related to increased hygiene practices and societal lockdown measures during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is interesting to note that the cases began to rise again from summer onwards in 2023, but the overall count remains less compared to pre-COVID times.

Deaths Analysis

Despite the high number of cases, the fatality rate of the disease remains low. Peak deaths occurred in 2014 and gradually decreased each year till 2020, followed by sporadic single-digit deaths. April to June consistently recorded the highest deaths each year, correlating with the high incidence of cases during this period. In the entirety of 2020 and onward, deaths decreased drastically, with many months recording zero deaths despite continuous cases. This could be attributed to improved medical procedures, increased early detection, and timely treatment of the disease.

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