

Chinese Notifiable Infectious Diseases Surveillance Report

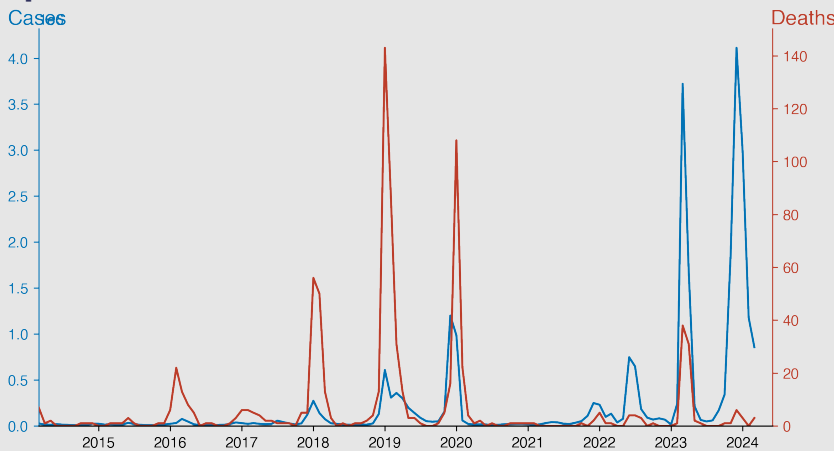
Influenza

March 2024

Introduction

Influenza, often referred to as the flu, is a highly contagious viral infection affecting the respiratory system. It is caused by influenza viruses and is spread mainly by droplets made when people with the flu cough, sneeze or talk. Symptoms typically include fever, cough, sore throat, and muscle aches. Influenza generally circulates yearly in the colder months and can lead to serious complications, particularly in high-risk groups including the very young, elderly, and those with underlying health conditions. Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent infection.

Temporal Trend



Highlights

- Dramatic Increase in Cases:** The influenza cases in the Chinese mainland have undergone a tremendous rise, especially since early 2023, reaching over 3 million cases in March 2023.
- High Incidence Year-round:** Unlike the conventional seasonality observed with influenza, high incidence rates were found all-year-round, suggesting a sustained transmission.
- Lower Fatality Rates:** Despite increased incidence, fatality rates have remained relatively low, highlighting a good clinical and health care response.
- Recent Slight Decline:** As of March 2024, although the situation remains severe with over 856,355 cases, there is a slight decline compared to the number of cases in early 2024 and late 2023.

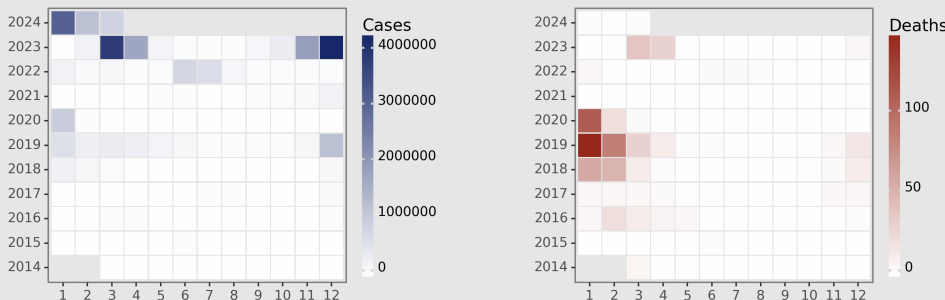
Cases Analysis

The Influenza cases in mainland China fluctuated greatly from 2014 to 2024. The data shows a seasonality pattern, with the peaks often emerging in winter and early spring. There was a significant surge in cases from 2019, peaking in December 2019 with 1,199,771 cases. The pattern continues to increase dramatically towards 2023, reporting over 4 million cases in December that year. We can note a decrease in incidence in 2024, yet the recorded cases remained considerably higher compared to initial years.

Deaths Analysis

Throughout the observed period, the number of deaths remained relatively low despite fluctuations in the number of cases. The highest recorded deaths occurred in January 2019 with 143 deaths. Even during severe spikes in the number of cases, the recorded deaths remained consistently low, indicating that the strain of influenza may not be particularly lethal, or that medical interventions were effective in preventing deaths. However, the consistency in low mortality rates warrants further investigation into the data's accuracy or reporting mechanisms for influenza-related deaths in the mainland.

Distribution



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