

Chinese Notifiable Infectious Diseases Surveillance Report

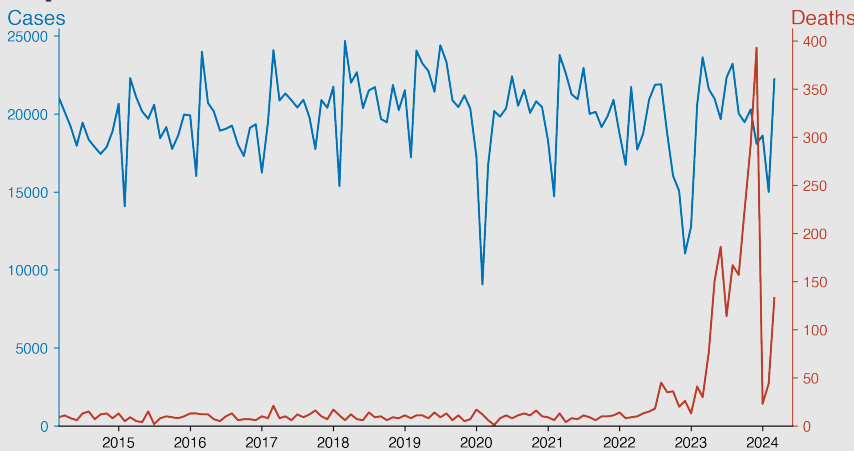
Hepatitis C

March 2024

Introduction

Hepatitis C is a viral infection primarily affecting the liver, caused by the Hepatitis C virus. It often manifests as a silent, chronic infection, potentially leading to serious liver damage, cirrhosis, or even liver cancer over decades. The infection is primarily transmitted through direct blood-to-blood contact, often via shared drug injection equipment, unscreened blood transfusions, or unsafe medical practices. Hepatitis C does not always show noticeable symptoms, making its diagnosis challenging. There is no vaccine, but treatment options have dramatically improved in recent years and can eradicate the virus in most cases.

Temporal Trend



Highlights

- There is a notable increase in Hepatitis C-related deaths since 2022, with counts rising to triple figures.
- The number of cases over the years largely fluctuates between 15,000 - 24,000, with a significant dip to around 11,000 in December 2022.
- The overall case counts reveal relatively stable transmission rates over the years without any significant decrease or increase.
- The recent data from 2024 shows an alarming rise in deaths, underscoring a critical situation and the urgency for intervention.

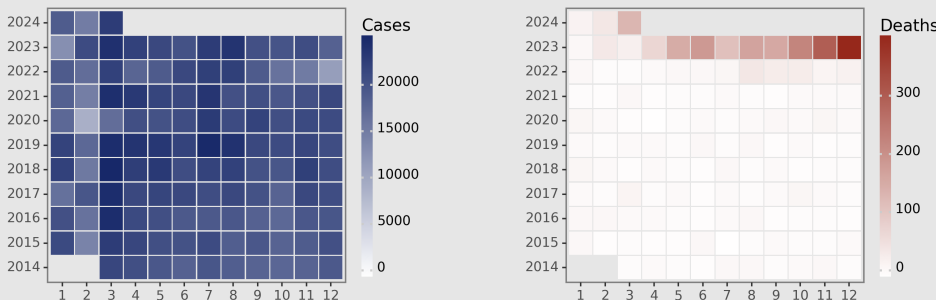
Cases Analysis

There is a cyclical pattern of rise and fall in Hepatitis C cases reported in mainland China between 2014-2024. Generally, each year the number of cases appears to peak around March (20,000-25,000 cases), possibly due to increased testing following Chinese New Year festivities. Surprisingly, in 2022 and 2023 there is a significant decrease in cases, before sharply rising in 2023. This could be due to factors such as changes in healthcare policies, public awareness, or even change in testing and reporting methods.

Deaths Analysis

The death toll from Hepatitis C in the Chinese mainland is relatively stable from 2014 to mid-2022, with an average of around 10 deaths per month. However, a dramatic rise in deaths is observed from mid-2022, peaking at 393 deaths in December 2023. The steep increase only drops slightly in early 2024. This catastrophic surge might suggest a delay in diagnosis and proper intervention, which warrants urgent public health attention and response to curb further mortality.

Distribution



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