

Chinese Notifiable Infectious Diseases Surveillance Report

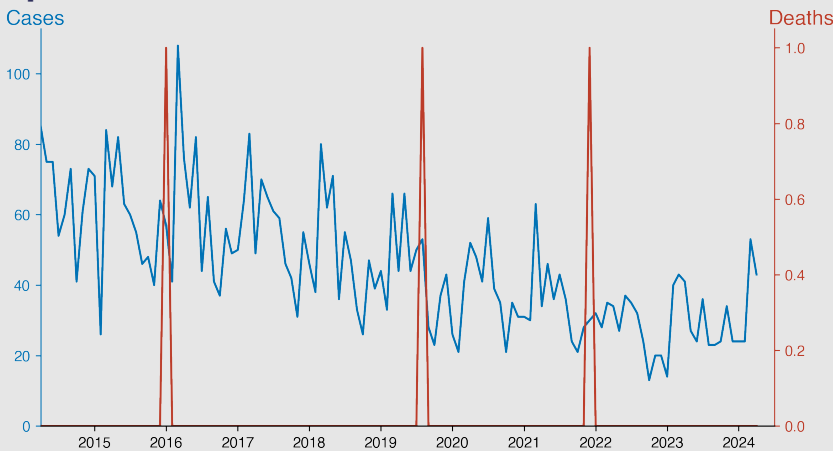
Leprosy

April 2024

Introduction

Leprosy, also known as Hansen's disease, is an infectious disease caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium leprae*. The disease primarily affects the skin, peripheral nerves, and mucosal surfaces of the upper respiratory tract. Leprosy is characterized by skin lesions and progressive nerve damage, which may lead to disability. It is transmitted through droplets from the nose and mouth during close, frequent contact with untreated cases. Leprosy has a long incubation period, often manifesting 2-10 years after exposure and it can be effectively treated using multi-drug therapy.

Temporal Trend



Highlights

- The number of reported leprosy cases in the Chinese mainland has significantly decreased over the decade, from 85 cases in April 2014 to 43 cases in April 2024.
- A clear pattern emerges where leprosy cases seem to surge during spring (March-April), though the magnitude of this peak decelerates over the years.
- Leprosy-related death incidents are very rare, with only 3 recorded fatalities during the 2016-2021 period.
- Despite the overall decline, there is a modest upward trend of cases in early 2024, indicating the need for sustained public health vigilance.

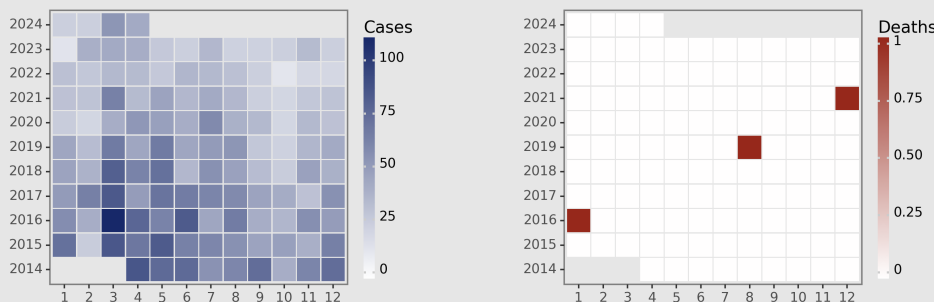
Cases Analysis

The reported Leprosy cases in mainland China consistently ranged between 20 to 108 cases per month, over a 10-year period from 2014 to 2024. Notably, there seemed to be a moderate reduction in the case numbers across the years. A substantial surge of 108 cases was noted in March 2016, the highest across the decade. By 2024, however, monthly cases had noticeably reduced, being consistently under 60, with several instances below 30. This indicates a positive downward trend in Leprosy incidence in China.

Deaths Analysis

The mortality rate for Leprosy in mainland China from 2014 to 2024 remains relatively low, with only three documented deaths throughout the decade. The first death occurred in January 2016, followed by a second in August 2019, then a third in December 2021. No pattern can be discerned from the deaths' distribution across the months and years. This minor mortality rate may attribute to China's efficient healthcare system detecting and managing Leprosy cases promptly. However, continuous monitoring is crucial as Leprosy often leads to severe disabilities if not treated early, which impacts quality of life rather than causing death. (Word count: 103)

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