

AUGUST 29, 2024

ISSUE AT A GLANCE

MPOX DECLARED A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY OF INTERNATIONAL CONCERN



Mpox Declared a Public Health Emergency

The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared Mpox (formerly known as monkeypox) as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) due to its rapid global spread, emergence of new variants, and increasing cases worldwide. This declaration calls for a coordinated global response to control the outbreak and prevent further transmission.

Symptoms of Mpox:

- Common symptoms include fever, headache, muscle aches, back pain, low energy, swollen lymph nodes, and pox-like rashes that last for about 2-4 weeks.

Transmission of Mpox:

- Can spread from animals to humans (zoonotic transmission).
- Human-to-human transmission occurs through direct contact with body fluids, lesions, prolonged face-to-face contact (including sexual contact), or contact with contaminated objects.

● About Mpox

What is Mpox?

- A viral zoonotic disease caused by the monkeypox virus (MPXV).
- First reported in humans in 1970 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), predominantly in African regions.

Types of Mpox Virus (Clades):

- **Clade I:** Originated in Central Africa; associated with higher mortality.
- **Clade II:** Originated in West Africa; less severe.
- **New Variant (Clade Ib):** Recently discovered, primarily spreading through sexual contact, unlike previous strains.



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Why Mpox is a Public Health Emergency?

Emergence of a New Variant (Clade Ib):

- The new Clade Ib variant shows a different pattern of spread, predominantly through sexual contact, leading to faster transmission among humans.

Rapid Increase in Cases:

- Over 99,000 cases and 208 deaths reported globally since 2022.
- The virus is mutating and diversifying, making it more challenging to control.

New Geographic Spread:

- Cases have been reported in countries like Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda, which previously had no recorded Mpox cases.

What is Monkeypox?

Monkeypox is a viral zoonosis (a virus transmitted to humans from animals) with symptoms very similar to those seen in the past in smallpox patients, although it is clinically less severe. It occurs primarily in tropical rainforest areas of Central and West Africa and is occasionally found in other regions.



SYMPTOMS

- Patients typically contract fever and also get rash and swollen lymph nodes and may lead to a range of medical complications.
- It is usually a self-limited disease with the symptoms lasting from 2 to 4 weeks.

DIAGNOSIS

- The clinical differential diagnosis that must be considered includes other rash illnesses, such as chickenpox, measles, bacterial skin infections, scabies, syphilis, and medication-associated allergies.

OUTBREAK ACROSS THE WORLD



HOW IS IT TRANSMITTED?

- Monkeypox is transmitted to humans through close contact with an infected person or animal, or with material contaminated with the virus.
- The virus is transmitted from one person to another by close contact with lesions, body fluids, respiratory droplets and contaminated materials, such as bedding.

IS THERE A VACCINE?

- Vaccines for smallpox eradication also provide protection against monkeypox.
- Newer vaccines have been developed of which one has been approved for monkeypox.
- An antiviral agent developed for the treatment for smallpox has also been licensed for monkeypox.

Key Differences: Mpox, Smallpox, and Chickenpox

Smallpox

- **Virus:**Variola virus
- **Severity:**Highly severe, often fatal
- **Status:**Eradicated in 1980
- **Transmission:** Highly contagious through respiratory droplets and contact with lesions
- **Symptoms:** Fever, headache, severe fatigue, vomiting, deep-seated, pus-filled rash
- **Vaccination:** No longer needed

Mpox (Monkeypox)

- **Virus:**Monkeypox virus (MPXV)
- **Severity:**Milder than smallpox, rarely fatal
- **Status:**Endemic in Central and West Africa, cases emerging globally
- **Transmission:**Spread through contact with infected animals, lesions, or bodily fluids
- **Symptoms:**Fever, headache, swollen lymph nodes, rash stages
- **Vaccination:**Not routinely recommended, given to high-risk individuals

Chickenpox

- **Virus:**Varicella-zoster virus (VZV)
- **Severity:**Mild
- **Status:**Common childhood illness, less common due to vaccination
- **Transmission:**Highly contagious through respiratory droplets and contact with lesions
- **Symptoms:**Fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, itchy, fluid-filled rash
- **Vaccination:**Routine vaccination for children and non-immune adults

Conclusion

The declaration of Mpox as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern by WHO underscores the urgent need for a coordinated global response. Addressing the emergence of new variants, ensuring vaccine equity, and enhancing preventive measures are crucial to controlling the outbreak and preventing future health threats.