

MULTI-COUNTRY MPOX OUTBREAK

MAY 2024

Global overview:

Mpox (previously known as monkeypox) is caused by an infection with the monkeypox virus. The monkeypox virus is classified into two clades. This being clade I, identified as the Congo Basin clade, and clade II, formerly referred to as the West African clade. Clade II is further subdivided into clade IIa and clade IIb (NICD, 2024).

There has been a global mpox outbreak that has been ongoing since 2022 and has spread to more than 100 countries. This outbreak is associated with the clade II mpox sub-lineage. There have been 95 912 mpox cases documented from 118 countries for the period 01 January 2022 to 08 May 2024 (CDC, 2024). As of 31 March 2024, the total number of deaths reported from the outbreak was 185 from all six World Health Organization (WHO) regions, with 139 deaths reported from the Region of the Americas alone.

Since 2023, there has been an ongoing mpox outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), primarily due to mpox virus clade I. Clade I has been characterized as having a higher virulence and fatality rate than the global outbreak associated with the clade 2 sub-lineage (NICD, 2024).

Region of the Americas – United States of America (USA):

As of 25 March 2024, the USA has reported 31 904 cases of mpox since the beginning of the outbreak in 2022, with 58 deaths (PAHO, 2024). In response to the outbreak in 2022, the modified vaccinia virus Ankara-Bavarian Nordic vaccine (Jynneos, Imvamune and Imvanex) was made available to at-risk populations to contain the global outbreak (ProMED, 2024). As of January 2024, only 23% of the population at risk has been fully vaccinated with two doses of the vaccine. However, there has not been a marked change in the weekly or monthly national case counts during the last six months. Most cases that do arise are in those who are not vaccinated or have only received one dose of the Jynneos vaccine (CDC2, 2024).

European Region:

Since the start of the mpox outbreak and as of 08 April 2024, the region has recorded 22 298 confirmed cases from 29 European Union countries, including 10 deaths. From January 2024 up until 08 April 2024, 323 mpox cases have been reported from 17 European Union countries. Most of the cases have been reported from Spain (n = 150), Italy (n = 50), France (n = 36) and Germany (n = 28) (ECDC 2024).

African Region:

From January 2024 to 12 May 2024, a total of 6 089 cases of mpox has been detected in the region, with 336 deaths. This results in a case fatality rate (CFR) of 5.5%. The five

countries that have reported mpox cases since the beginning of the year are Cameroon (14 cases; 1 death), Central African Republic (93 cases; 0 deaths), DRC (5900 cases, 335 deaths), Republic of the Congo (78 cases, 0 deaths) and Liberia (4 cases, 0 deaths) (AfricaCDC, 2024).

- **DRC**

An outbreak of mpox disease of the clade I sub-lineage of the monkeypox virus has been ongoing in the DRC since 2023. The disease is known to be endemic in the country. However, the DRC is currently experiencing its largest outbreak, with the government declaring it a nationwide health emergency on 05 May 2023. Since the beginning of the year, the DRC's cumulative cases amounted to 5 900 cases and 335 deaths (CFR = 5.7%), reported from 23 out of the 26 provinces. Of these cases, children under the age of 15 years accounted for 68% of the total cases and 85% of the total deaths. Of all confirmed cases, 73% were male. The clade I sub-lineage was isolated from all confirmed cases.

The Ministry of Public Health in the country has increased its efforts to intensify surveillance with active case finding and management. Risk communication and community engagements are ongoing in the affected provinces (AfricaCDC, 2024).

- **Republic of the Congo**

Since January 2024 and as of 26 April 2024, the Republic of the Congo has reported a total of 78 cases and zero deaths, from five of the 12 provinces in the country. Children under the age of 15 years accounted for 44% of confirmed cases, with males accounting for 58% of all confirmed cases.

The Ministry of Health officially declared the mpox outbreak on 23 April 2024. Public health actions taken include active enhanced surveillance as well as risk communication activities in the provinces affected by the outbreak (AfricaCDC, 2024).

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