



3. WHO Declares Mpox Outbreak a Global Health Emergency

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Abstract

The World Health Organization (WHO) has classified the recent mpox outbreak as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). This designation follows a review by an International Health Regulations (IHR) Emergency Committee, which highlighted the significant risk of mpox, including a new strain identified in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). This report discusses the WHO's response, current global and regional measures, and implications for international health.

Key Words: Mpox, Monkeypox, PublicHealthEmergency, Vaccination, GlobalHealthResponse,

1. Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, declared the ongoing mpox outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). This decision was based on recommendations from an IHR Emergency Committee comprised of independent experts, who assessed the outbreak's potential to spread beyond its current geographic scope.

2. WHO's Declaration

The Emergency Committee's findings indicated a substantial risk of mpox transmission, exacerbated by the emergence of a new strain in the DRC. The Committee's assessment underlined the need for an immediate and coordinated international response to mitigate the spread and impact of the disease.

3. Regional and Global Response

3.1. African Context

Dr. Matshidiso Moeti, WHO's Regional Director for Africa, underscored ongoing efforts to bolster containment measures in affected regions. The current outbreak in the DRC has resulted in over



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15,600 cases and 537 deaths. A new clade (1b) of the virus is being transmitted through sexual networks to neighboring countries, compounding the crisis.

3.2. Vaccination and Funding

In response to the outbreak, the WHO has endorsed two vaccines for mpox and initiated Emergency Use Listing (EUL) procedures to facilitate access, particularly for lower-income countries. The WHO has allocated \$1.45 million from its Contingency Fund for Emergencies and is seeking an additional \$15 million for surveillance and response efforts. This appeal for support aims to bolster global preparedness and response.

4. National Measures in India

4.1. Hospital Preparedness

In precautionary measures, the Indian Health Department has directed three Delhi government hospitals—Lok Nayak Jai Prakash (LNJP) Hospital, Guru Teg Bahadur (GTB) Hospital, and Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hospital—to establish isolation rooms for suspected or confirmed mpox cases. LNJP Hospital is designated as the primary facility, with the other hospitals on standby.

4.2. Current Status and Guidelines

As of now, India has not reported any mpox cases. However, the directive aims to ensure preparedness in the event of a future outbreak. Additionally, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in New Delhi has issued guidelines for the management of suspected mpox cases.

4.3. Government Oversight

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Dr. P. K. Mishra, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, are closely monitoring the situation. Recent high-level meetings have reviewed the country's preparedness and public health measures, with the government assessing the risk of a major outbreak as low.

5. WHO's Perspective on Mpox

Dr. Hans Kluge, WHO Regional Director for Europe, has emphasized that mpox should not be compared to COVID-19. He reassured that the risk to the general population is currently low, and that European governments should demonstrate strong political commitment to eliminating mpox. Dr. Kluge highlighted that mpox transmission occurs primarily through skin-to-skin contact, including



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during sexual activity. He also noted that Europe would not face lockdowns similar to those experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

6. Current Situation in Europe

Europe is experiencing approximately 100 new cases of mpox clade 2 monthly. Recently, Sweden reported its first case of mpox clade 1, the variant associated with the latest outbreak in the DRC.

7. Vaccination and Global Solidarity

7.1. Vaccine Recommendations

The WHO recommends the use of smallpox vaccines for mpox, including MVA-BN, LC16, and ACAM2000. Bavarian Nordic, the producer of MVA-BN, is expected to produce 10 million doses by the end of 2025, with up to two million doses available this year. The LC16 vaccine, produced in Japan, has a significant stockpile, and Japan is negotiating vaccine donations to the DRC.

7.2. Call for International Support

Dr. Kluge has called for increased European solidarity with Africa regarding vaccine access and support. The global response to the mpox outbreak requires coordinated efforts and resources to effectively address the crisis.

8. Conclusion

The declaration of mpox as a PHEIC underscores the urgent need for a robust international response to control the outbreak. With significant efforts underway to enhance preparedness, containment, and vaccination, global solidarity and collaboration remain critical in managing and mitigating the impact of mpox.

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