

ASEAN Biodiaspora Virtual Center

Media Monitoring for Infectious and Emerging Diseases

ASEAN REGION

February 20 – 21, 2024



This report is the result of media monitoring on infectious and emerging diseases happening around the world and among the ASEAN Member States. In order to improve pandemic and epidemic preparedness and response in the ASEAN Region. We provide this report three times a week starting from January 2024.

Global Situation

COVID-19

- **Bangladesh** reported 67 more COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours, with 792 samples tested, a positivity rate of 8.46% (The Daily Observer, 2024). The country's total deaths remained at 29,486, with 2,048,007 cases and 2,015,116 recoveries. [\[Full article\]](#)
- **India** experienced a single-day increase in COVID-19 cases at February 20, with 875 active cases recorded (ETHealthworld, 2024). The number of daily cases increased after a new variant emerged and cold weather conditions. The maximum number of cases was 841 on December 31, 2023. India has experienced three COVID-19 waves, with the Delta wave peaking in April-June 2021. Since the pandemic began in early 2020, over 45 million people have been infected and over 530,000 deaths have been recorded. [\[Full article\]](#)
- **Taiwan:** The Center for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) reported 711 COVID-19 hospitalizations last week, the highest in six months, and 103,250 hospital visits for influenza-like illnesses (I-chia, L., 2024). Flu during the Lunar New Year holiday was less prevalent, but cases are expected to increase due to school openings, lantern festival events, and increased travel. [\[Full article\]](#)

Hantavirus Infection

- The **United States (US):** New Mexico Department of Health has confirmed the first case of hantavirus pulmonary syndrome in 2024 (Tucker, E.T., 2024). The case was reported in San Juan County where a man was hospitalized, but has since been let go and is recovering at home, a news release said. [\[Full article\]](#)

Leptospirosis

- **Fiji:** The Ministry of Health and Medical Services has reported one death and 217 cases of leptospirosis this year (Shaw, 2024). Two cases were reported in Nalauwaki Village, Waya Island on Yasawa. A team was deployed to investigate and respond to the cases. The 22-year-old died, while the 41-year-old recovered and was discharged home. The ministry has conducted awareness campaigns, environmental risk assessments, and medical screening, and distributed rat baits. [\[Full article\]](#)



Measles

- **Austria:** Since January 2024, 129 confirmed cases of measles have been reported in Austria, with 21 cases in Lower Austria and four currently infected (Horaczek T, 2024). Measles is a highly contagious viral disease characterized by flu-like symptoms and a characteristic skin rash. The highest risk of infection is in the prodromal phase, which lasts 2-4 days and is characterized by severe coughing. Possible complications include bacterial superinfections, pneumonia, or larynx inflammation. The most infected people are in Tyrol, Vienna, and Styria. The best prevention against measles is vaccination, which is available free of charge at public vaccination centers for all age groups. Lower Austria currently ranks third in the country with 129 confirmed cases. [\[Full article\]](#)
- **Pakistan:** A measles outbreak in Talib Richo coastal village has resulted in four deaths, highlighting the inadequacies of the administration and authorities in providing essential facilities to remote communities (Khawaja K.K, 2024). The outbreak was attributed to a lack of awareness and vaccinations among children in remote areas. Medical teams are now assessing the severity of the situation and establishing anti-measles vaccination camps to combat the spread of the disease. The lack of clean water and unhygienic living conditions contribute to the outbreak. [\[Full article\]](#)
- **Russia:** The measles situation in the Karaganda region is unstable, with 979 suspected cases identified and 578 confirmed, with 75% of infected children under 14 (Agilbaeva A, 2024). Over 85% of sick people lack immunity, and 174 infectious disease hospitals are occupied. Over 58,000 people have been vaccinated to protect against severe infections. From October 2023 to February 2024, over 72 thousand cases of acute respiratory viral infection (ARVI) were registered, with 61% of cases being children under 14. Influenza cases have also increased, with 80 positive samples identified since November. All patients receive outpatient treatment and face-mask use is mandatory in medical facility. [\[Full article\]](#)
- **Taiwan** has reported its first locally acquired measles case in 2024, involving a 30-year-old male who developed a fever and rash (Herriman, 2024). The case is the first domestic infection case this year, and the possible source of infection is under investigation. The CDC has identified 199 contacts, including four family members, two non-family members, and 193 medical contacts. Since 2020, Taiwan has seen four measles cases, with the most recent being in September 2022. The virus is highly contagious and can live for up to two hours in an airspace after an infected person leaves an area. Measles can be severe in all age groups and lead to serious complications, including pneumonia and death. [\[Full article\]](#)
- **United Kingdom:** A measles case has been confirmed in Northern Ireland, marking the first case in seven years (BBC, 2024). The case was picked up by an adult while travelling. Public health actions are being taken, and close contacts have been notified. The last confirmed case was in 2017. A vaccination catch-up program is currently underway, offering first and second doses to those aged 12-25 who missed the first dose. [\[Full article\]](#)



- The **United States (US)**: Multiple measles cases have been confirmed at a South Florida elementary school, following a nationwide alert about an increase in cases (Golgowski N, 2024). A sixth case was confirmed at Manatee Bay Elementary School in Weston, just west of Fort Lauderdale. The outbreak follows the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) recent alert, which urged healthcare providers to be on alert for potential measles cases. Most cases involved children and adolescents who had not received a measles-containing vaccine, even if age-eligible. As of last week, there have been 20 measles cases reported in 11 states across the country so far this year, about 34% of the total cases reported during all of last year. The measles virus is highly contagious, with the first symptoms appearing seven to 14 days after infection. The measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine is about 97% effective in preventing infection after two doses and 93% effective after just one. [\[Full article\]](#)

Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV)

- **Saudi Arabia** has reported four more MERS-CoV cases, two of which were fatal, confirmed between October 10 and November 16, 2023 in three different regions (Schnirring, L., 2024). Two were men, and two were women. All had underlying health conditions, and none were health workers. One patient was a camel owner, while another had a history of indirect contact with camels. None of the patients had consumed raw camel milk before their symptoms began. The WHO said there are no epidemiologic links between any of the patients, and no secondary cases were found. [\[Full article\]](#)

Mpox

- The **United States (US)**: The Genesee County Health Department (GCHD) is urging at-risk individuals to get the safe and effective mpox vaccine after two new cases were reported (Tanya, 2024). Vaccination is recommended for those who have been exposed or suspect exposure, and those with risk factors such as anonymous or multiple sex partners, gay, bisexual, transgender, nonbinary, and new sexually transmitted infections. The vaccine is available for free at GCHD's Burton Branch. [\[Full article\]](#)

Rabies

- **Ukraine**: A 59-year-old man with rabies symptoms died in the Kharkiv Infectious Disease Hospital after being bitten by a domestic cat (Balandyukh, 2024). This is the first death from rabies in the Kharkiv region in the last nine years. Last year, one fatal case of rabies was recorded in Ukraine, followed by two in 2022, one in 2021, and none in 2020. Cats are the most common source of rabies in Ukraine, followed by dogs, and the last fatal case was recorded in Kharkiv Oblast in 2015. The rabies vaccine prevents the disease in 96-99% of cases, and treatment should begin no later than the 14th day from the bite. [\[Full article\]](#)

Tuberculosis (TB)

- The **United States (US)**: Four Westborough residents are being treated for TB (Sullivan, 2024). In 2023, the total number of persons with active TB, latent TB, suspected TB, and close contacts reported to Westborough was 80, down from 86 in 2022. TB can be contracted and spread through coughing or sneezing, and latent TB can be detected and treated with testing. [\[Full article\]](#)



Typhoid

- **Taiwan:** On February 20, Taiwan reported its first locally acquired typhoid fever case this year, involving a woman in her 20s who developed symptoms of vomiting and diarrhea after visiting a fishing port in northern Taiwan (Yi-ning, Z. & Kao, E., 2024). A typhoid fever test was conducted on February 16, and the woman is still hospitalized for treatment. The woman's visit to a fishing port with two friends likely resulted in the bacteria being contracted through contaminated raw seafood consumption, according to CDC physician. [[Full article](#)]

Regional Situation

Dengue

- **Indonesia:** Since January 2024, 389 cases of dengue hemorrhagic fever (DHF) have occurred in Bogor City, with two deaths (Awaludin, 2024). The highest number of cases was recorded in mid-2022, while the highest number of deaths occurred in 2022 and 2023. The City Health Office has requested increased community participation in efforts to control the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito vector, using mosquito eradication activities independently once a week. The speed of dengue fever diagnosis is being increased by using NS-1 distributed to Public Health Centers, and adequate management of sufferers in healthcare facilities is being implemented. The city government has also promised to provide basic services in 2024. [[Full article](#)]
- **Malaysia:** Dengue cases in Johor have increased by 157% in Epidemiology Week 07/2024, with 2,555 cases recorded, compared to 994 cases in 2023 (Cue, 2024). The highest number of cases was reported in Johor Bahru, followed by Kulai, Kota Tinggi, Batu Pahat, Segamat, Muar, Tangkak, Pontian, Kluang, and Mersing. The cumulative number of outbreak localities in Johor is 364, compared to 126 in 2023. Three deaths were reported in the week, and the cumulative number of dengue deaths up to that period was up to four cases. The Johor Health Department plans to renovate an abandoned building to provide a more comfortable environment for medical staff and patients. [[Full article](#)]

Leptospirosis

- **Philippines:** Bacolod City Health Office reported its first leptospirosis death this year, resulting in a 32-year-old male (Singuay M, 2024). The disease, caused by bacteria, affects humans and animals. The most common causes include contaminated water, swallowing, and exposing open wounds. In 2023, 92 leptospirosis cases were reported, with 16 deaths. The most common complications include delayed health-seeking behavior and denial of infection. [[Full article](#)]



Rabies

- **Vietnam:** In the first two months of 2024, three people in Dak Lak were bitten by dogs but did not get vaccinated, leading to their deaths from rabies (Thuy Diem, 2024). The Dak Lak Center for Disease Control reported three deaths from rabies since the beginning of 2024. The health sector recommends that people who are bitten by a dog or scratched by a cat should seek medical advice and instructions on vaccination or disease prevention serum. Not getting vaccinated poses dangerous risks and can lead to death. [[Full article](#)]

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