

# EDITORIAL

## MONKEY POX

Monkey pox is an infectious viral disease that can occur in both humans and some other animals. Early symptoms include fever, headache, myalgia, shivering, backache, and feeling extremely tired. Typically there are swollen lymph nodes behind the ear, below the jaw, in the neck or in the groin. This is followed by a rash that forms blisters and crusts over; most frequently in the mouth, on the face, hands and feet, genitals and eyes. The time from exposure to onset of symptoms is on average 12 days; though ranges from 5-to-21 days. The duration of symptoms is typically two to four weeks. Cases may be severe, especially in children, pregnant women or people with suppressed immune systems.

Monkey pox may be spread from handling bush meat, an animal bite or scratch, body fluids, contaminated objects, or close contact with an infected person. The virus normally circulates among certain rodents. Diagnosis can be confirmed by testing a lesion for the virus's DNA. The disease can appear similar to chickenpox.

The smallpox vaccine can prevent infection with 85% effectiveness. In 2019, a monkey pox vaccine, Jynneos, was approved for adults in the United States. The current standard for treatment is tecovirimat, an antiviral that is specifically intended to treat infections with orthopoxviruses such as smallpox and monkey pox. It is approved for the treatment of monkey pox in the European Union and the United States. Cidofovir or brincidofovir may also be useful. Reports of the risk of death, if untreated, are as high as 10% to 11% in the Congo Basin (Central African) clade of monkey pox.

Monkey pox was first identified in 1958 among laboratory monkeys in Copenhagen, Denmark. Monkeys are not a natural reservoir of the virus. The first cases in humans were found in 1970 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. An outbreak that occurred in the United States in 2003 was traced to a pet store where rodents imported from Ghana were sold. The 2022 monkey pox outbreak represents the first incidence of widespread community transmission outside of Africa, which began in the United Kingdom in May 2022, with subsequent cases confirmed

in at least 20 countries, in Europe, North America, South America, Asia, North Africa and Australia.

Health authorities are on alert because this is an unusual situation but most scientists agree this outbreak will not lead to a pandemic like covid-19.

For one thing, monkey pox is not a new virus. We already have vaccine and treatment that are effective against it, also monkey pox spreads more slowly than covid-19 and the distinctive rash means it's easy to know if you are infected and need to stay away from others.

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