



Monkey Pox An upcoming threat

Despite the name the animal reservoirs for monkey virus are squirrels and rodents. It causes rare zoonotic infection in communities in the rainforest belt of central Africa, producing a vesicular rash that is indistinguishable from small pox but differentiated by the presence of lymphadenopathy, less infectious. Little person to person transmission occurs. Outbreak outside Africa has been linked to importation of African animals as exotic pets. People with monkey pox get a rash that may be located on or near the genitals (penis, labia, vagina, or anus) and could be on other areas like hands, feet, chest, face or mouth. The rash will go through several stages including scabs before healing. The rash can initially look like pimples or blisters and may be painful or itchy. Other symptoms can include fever, chills, swollen lymphadenopathy exhaustion, muscle aches, backache, and respiratory symptoms. Sometimes people have flu like symptoms before the rash, some people get rash first followed by other symptoms, and others only experience rashes.

Monkey pox symptoms usually start within 3 weeks of exposure to the virus. It can be spread from the time symptom start until the rash has healed, all scabs have fallen off and a fresh layer of skin has formed. The illness typically last 2-4 weeks.

The monkey pox is often transmitted through close sustained physical contact almost exclusively associated with sexual contact in the current outbreak. It can also be transmitted to humans through close contact with infected person, or animals or the material contaminated with the virus and close contact with the lesion, body fluids, respiratory droplets, and contaminated materials such as bedding.

Infected animals can spread monkey pox virus to people and it is possible that people who are infected can spread virus to animals through close contact.

Vaccine used during the smallpox eradication programme also provided protection against monkey pox. Newer vaccine Jynneos and ACAM 2000 is also approved. An antiviral agent known as Tecovirimat that was developed for small pox was licensed by the European medicines agencies (EMA) for monkey pox in 2022.

Raising awareness of risk factors and educating people about the measures they can take to reduce exposure to the virus is the main prevention strategy for monkey pox.

Prof. Dr. Md. Ashif Mashud Chowdhury

Department of Medicine

Dhaka National Medical College

References

1. Monkey Pox-Davidsons Principles and Practice of Medicine-24th Edition
2. Centre for Disease Control (CDC)-USA, August 5, 2022
3. Monkey Pox-WHO, May 19, 2022