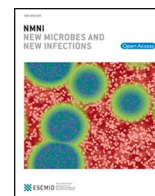




Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

New Microbes and New Infections

journal homepage: www.journals.elsevier.com/new-microbes-and-new-infections

Letter to the Editor

Mpox emerges in Zimbabwe: A turning point in global health vigilance

ARTICLE INFO

Handling Editor: Patricia Schlegenhaut

Keywords:

Mpox

Global health

Zoonotic diseases

Zimbabwe

Vaccine access

Dear Editor,

Zimbabwe has recorded its first cases of Mpox, signaling a critical moment in the ongoing global battle against this re-emerging disease [1]. The Ministry of Health and Child Care announced that two individuals—a young boy in Harare and a male adult in Mberengwa—tested positive for Mpox. Both patients have a history of recent travel to countries experiencing outbreaks, highlighting the ability of the virus to transcend borders in our interconnected world. The 11-year-old boy visited South Africa in August 2024 and returned to Zimbabwe on September 10. He began exhibiting symptoms on September 23 but is now recovering at home and is no longer infectious. Seven contacts have been identified and are under monitoring. The second case involves a 24-year-old man who traveled to Tanzania on September 12 and returned on September 21. He developed symptoms on September 29 and is also in home isolation, no longer posing an infection risk. Contact-tracing efforts are underway in both cases.

These developments have occurred against the backdrop of increasing Mpox cases globally. In 2024 alone, Africa reported 7535 confirmed cases and 32 deaths [2]. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared Mpox a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on August 14, 2024, underscoring the urgent need for a coordinated international response [3]. Mpox, caused by the monkeypox virus (MPXV), is a zoonotic disease that has traditionally been endemic to Central and West Africa [4]. However, the virus has recently been shown a troubling ability to mutate and spread to new regions [3]. Two genetically distinct clades exist: Clade I, which is highly infectious with higher mortality rates, and Clade II, which has been predominant in the global outbreak of 2022–2023 [2]. Notably, a new variant known as Clade Ib has emerged, spreading to countries like Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, and Kenya, and has even been reported in Sweden in a traveler returning from the Democratic Republic of the Congo [2,3].

Zimbabwe's health authorities have activated a response plan that includes awareness campaigns and training of healthcare personnel. These measures are crucial; however, the situation calls for broader actions. Vaccination efforts need to be accelerated, especially in high- and low-income countries. Equitable access to vaccines and antiviral

treatments, such as tecovirimat, is essential to prevent further spread and mutation of the virus [2]. The Mpox cases in Zimbabwe serve as a turning point that highlights the consequences of neglecting diseases that are perceived as confined to specific regions. The global community must recognize that delayed action can lead to wider epidemics with more severe strains. Investing in global health infrastructure and adopting a One Health approach that considers human, animal, and environmental health are imperative [5].

As the world continues to grapple with the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, the emergence of Mpox in new regions underscores the need for sustained vigilance and proactive measures. Zimbabwe's experience is a clarion call to re-evaluate global health strategies, prioritize equity in healthcare access, and strengthen international cooperation to address not just Mpox but future infectious disease threats.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Chelsea Rachael Tafawa: Conceptualization, Project administration, Supervision, Validation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. **Manvinder Brar:** Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. **Sanjit Sah:** Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. **Rachana Mehta:** Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. **Ganesh Bushi:** Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. **Ashok Kumar Balaraman:** Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. **Sakshi Pandey:** Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. **Amogh Verma:** Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

Assistance with the study

No assistance received.

Financial Support and sponsorship

All authors declare that they received no financial support or sponsorship for this study.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nmni.2024.101542>

Received 16 October 2024; Accepted 25 November 2024

Available online 27 November 2024

2052-2975/© 2024 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Acknowledgments

We appreciate the support of: Medicos In Research, Nautanwa, UP 273164, India, throughout the manuscript development.

References

- [1] Mary Taruvinga. Zimbabwe Records First Mpox Cases - Ministry of Health On High Alert Amid Response Plan Roll Out. allAfrica.com. Published October 14, 2024. Accessed October 16, 2024. <https://allafrica.com/stories/202410140011.html>.
- [2] Sah R, Srivastava S, Mehta R, et al. Global Mpox Outbreak: are we prepared for emerging strains? *New Microbes and New Infections* 2024;62. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nmni.2024.101466>. 101466-101466.
- [3] Simiyu BW, Verma A. Mpox 2024: A Global Call to Action Amid Rising Health Inequities. *Asia Pac J Publ Health*. Published online October 10, 2024. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/10105395241289688>.
- [4] Saloni S, Soman Biju, Tanti Arabindo, et al. Global resurgence of monkeypox (mpox) virus: a review of current outbreaks and public health strategies. *The Evidence* 2024; 2(3). <https://doi.org/10.61505/evidence.2024.2.3.82>.
- [5] Agarwal K, Srivastava S, Rukadikar A, et al. One health concept and its applications in clinical practice: a comprehensive review. *The Evidence* 2023;2(1). <https://doi.org/10.61505/evidence.2024.2.1.16>.

Chelsea Rachael Tafawa*
Maseno University, School of Medicine, Kisumu, Kenya

Manvinder Brar
Chitkara Centre for Research and Development, Chitkara University,
Himachal Pradesh, 174103, India
E-mail address: manvinder.brar.orp@chitkara.edu.in.

Sanjit Sah
Department of Paediatrics, Dr. D.Y. Patil Medical College, Hospital and
Research Centre, Dr. D.Y. Patil Vidyapeeth, Pune, 411018, Maharashtra,
India

Department of Public Health Dentistry, Dr. D.Y. Patil Dental College and
Hospital, Dr. D.Y. Patil Vidyapeeth, Pune, 411018, Maharashtra, India
E-mail address: sanjitsahnepal561@gmail.com.

Rachana Mehta
Clinical Microbiology, RDC, Manav Rachna International Institute of
Research and Studies, Faridabad, Haryana, 121004, India
Dr. Lal PathLabs - Nepal, Chandol-4, Maharajgunj, Kathmandu, 44600,
Nepal
E-mail address: mehtarachana89@gmail.com.

Ganesh Bushi
Center for Global Health Research, Saveetha Medical College and Hospital,
Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences, Saveetha University,
Chennai, India
E-mail address: ganeshbushi313@gmail.com.

Ashok Kumar Balaraman
Research and Enterprise, University of Cyberjaya, Persiaran Bestari, Cyber
11, 63000, Cyberjaya, Selangor, Malaysia
E-mail address: ashok@cyberjaya.edu.my.

Sakshi Pandey
Centre of Research Impact and Outcome, Chitkara University, Rajpura,
140417, Punjab, India
E-mail address: sakshi.pandey.orp@chitkara.edu.in.

Amogh Verma
Department of Internal Medicine, Rama Medical College Hospital and
Research Center, Hapur, Uttar Pradesh, India
Medicos In Research, Nautanwa, UP 273164, India
E-mail address: amoghverma2000@gmail.com.

* Corresponding author. Maseno University, School of Medicine,
Kisumu, Kenya.
E-mail address: chelsea.publish@gmail.com (C.R. Tafawa).