

Monkeypox: Are We Heading for Another Pandemic?

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Abstract

Of late, monkey pox has spread alarmingly into many countries. Originating from rain forest of African continent, it has now entered non endemic regions. Belonging to the group of pox viruses, this disease, although with less mortality, can be damaging if rising cases are not given due attention. This article overviews the origin, transmission, and key areas of monkeypox.

Keywords: Monkey Pox; Transmission; Spread; Virus

Abbreviations: WHO: World Health Organization

Introduction

The world has been reeling under the covid-19 for a considerable amount of time. Since its outbreak in Wuhan, China in 2019; it has swiftly engulfed most parts of the world-causing fatalities in large scale. The global economy would have never seen a huge slump had this Covid-19 not surfaced [1-9]. It has forced many of the nations to go for multiphases of lockdown. Of late, there has been a recent rise of monkeypox—another disease caused by virus. Originating from African sub-continent, it has slowly spread into other subcontinents. This article briefly describes the monkey pox disease and its re-emergence after a long gap.

Background

Monkeypox is mainly caused by virus-belonging to orthopoxvirus group. Other members of this set of viruses include cowpox virus, vaccinia as well as variola which can cause illness to the human being. Meanwhile, monkeypox is

characterized by two strains—namely Central African Strain and West African Strain. Between them, the latter strain is less lethal. If the origin of these virus is investigated, it got its root in the rain forest of South Africa. In the year 1958, virus was detected in the blood of monkeys. Slowly, this virus invaded the several African rodents. Subsequently, via international transfer, this disease entered America-initially through rodent to prairie dogs with final entry to human species [10].

Symptoms

Monkeypox is quite identical to other poxes as seen in human. Less severe than smallpox, persons infected with it remain asymptomatic. The incubation period is basically within seven to seventeen days. There are multiple initial symptoms such as mild fever, pain in muscle, exhaustion, body ache, swollen lymph nodes etc. After few days, the infected person slowly develops raised fluid filled bumps on face. Sometimes,



there appears lesion on the upper part of the body-which in some cases include genital and perianal areas. Eventually, within a span of two to four weeks, those lesions may fall off. Notably, within the initial symptoms, there occurs transmission. Considering the mortality, it has been estimated to be 1% to 10% in the worst-case scenario of African continent where remote areas are not fully equipped with proper medical facilities. As far as evidence of strain is concerned, only the less severe west African strain has been diagnosed [11-12].

Transmission

As far as transmission is concerned, it occurs via contact with body fluids. It has also been observed that virus infected animal can transmit the disease through bite. Research has indicated that the disease can be transmitted via respiratory droplets if there is direct contact or prolonged exposure. Sometimes, bleeding or clothing getting exposed to lesions may help in transmission of the disease [10-13].

Concluding remarks

Till now as claimed by World Health Organization (WHO), the virus has been found to be spreading up to 27 countries with a case load of 780 [13]. As per WHO, the May 2022 cluster identification in different countries poses a very grim picture. Almost, all those countries belong to the non-endemic areas. Another alarming fact is absence of direct travel link of these countries to endemic area. As such extensive investigations are under way to find the increase in infected patients within a short span of time. As far as the preventive measures that can be taken to curb the spread of this are concerned, one should maintain complete isolation from the infected animal-as well as their meat, blood etc. Another measure is to strict adoption of proper cooking of meat and their other allied edibles. As we are into the initial stages of this, we are yet to come up with directions of handling as well as preventive measures/healings thereof.

Maintaining strict hygiene by remaining proactive can be one of the viable solutions.

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