

Current Health Event

Measles in Lebanon

In 2013, a nation-wide outbreak of measles occurred in Lebanon. 1757 measles cases were reported to MOPH; 1451 (82%) were Lebanese and 231 (13%) were Syrians.

Editorial note

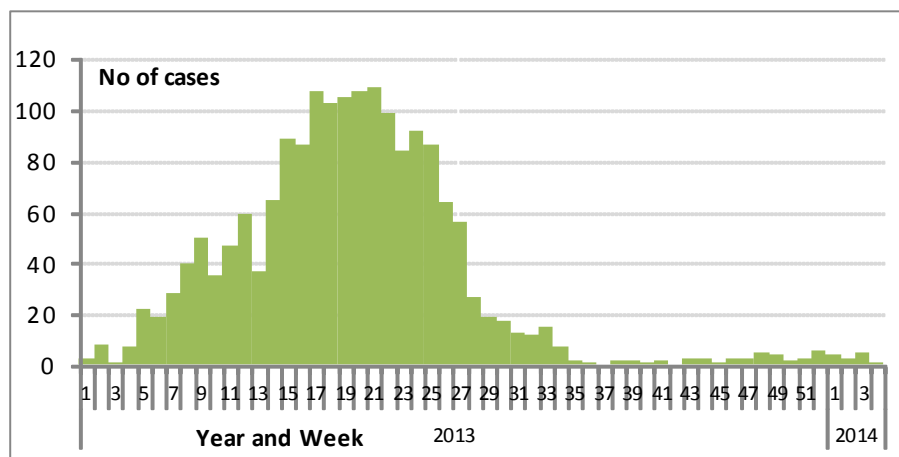
This outbreak is the largest outbreak of measles in Lebanon in the last decade; the last major outbreak was witnessed in 2007 which occurred after several outbreaks between 2003 and 2007. Since 2008 about 10- 20 cases of measles are reported yearly.

The sharp decrease in the number of reported cases of measles over the last six years could be attributed to the MR national campaign conducted in 2008 that decreased the pool of susceptible individuals. The accumulation of susceptible individuals since the last outbreak in 2007, coupled with influx of a large portion of non-immunized Syrians could explain the re-emergence of measles outbreak in 2013.

In Lebanon, measles diagnosis is based on standard case definition (*see box*). The recent outbreak in 2013 has spanned over a six-month period (*see figure*) and notifications of cases continued in 2014. The incidence is higher among the Lebanese than Syrians with a rate of 31/100,000 vs. 18/100,000; around 80% of cases were reported from hospital sources. Underreporting of cases among Syrians may not be ruled out due to the relative decreased access of Syrians to hospitals.

The highest affected age group is the under 18 years old children with the

Figure 1: Reported cases of measles by week 2013-2014



highest attack rate among under five years old (150/100,000) and five to nine years old (59/100,000). In response to the outbreak and in line with the epidemiological analysis of reported case profiles, the MOPH in collaboration with WHO, UNICEF,

the scientific societies and the NGO network have embarked in an enhanced routine vaccination reach every child approach. In April 2014 an MR national campaign was launched targeting children between the ages of 9 months and 18 years.

Suspected Case (SC) of measles: Any case with *maculopapular* rash and fever; **or:** Any case whom the physician suspected "measles".

Confirmed case (CC) of measles: A SC case and laboratory confirmation of measles: (*Positive IgM serology or positive PCR test for measles*); **or:** A SC of measles with direct epidemiologic link to a CC.

Laboratory confirmation: Serologic detection of measles-specific IgM, a significant increase in measles IgG level, isolation of measles virus, or detection of measles virus by nucleic acid amplification in a clinical specimen.

An outbreak of measles is defined as a chain of transmission with three or more confirmed cases.

Cumulative Notifiable diseases in Lebanon (Syrian)

Disease	2013 Cumul	2014 Cumul*	Mar	Apr
Vaccine Preventable Diseases				
Polio	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Acute Flaccid Paralysis	34(7)	10(5)	3(2)	2(1)
Measles	1760(232)	121(46)	41(13)	17(7)
Mumps	14(2)	16(11)	9(6)	0(0)
Pertussis	59(9)	22(6)	3(0)	0(0)
Rabies	1(1)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Rubella	27(1)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Tetanus	4(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Viral Hep B	141(8)	37(3)	7(1)	0(0)
Water/Food Borne Diseases				
Brucellosis	189(12)	27(1)	7(0)	2(0)
Hydatid cyst	13(3)	4(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Typhoid Fever	407(21)	40(1)	11(0)	1(1)
Viral Hep A	1551(220)	437(67)	138(13)	4(0)
Other Diseases				
Leishmaniasis	1033(1032)	223(222)	50(50)	0(0)
Meningitis	204(24)	46(4)	10(1)	4(0)
Viral Hep C	103(4)	22(1)	5(1)	1(0)

Source: Ministry of Public Health, Lebanon