



Monkeypox

Why in News

Recently, the US started surveillance on people travelling from Nigeria, who may have had contact with the individuals infected with Monkeypox.

Key Points

▪ About:

- It is a **viral zoonotic disease** (transmission from animals to humans) and is identified as a pox-like disease among monkeys **hence it is named Monkeypox**. It is **endemic to Nigeria**.
- It is **caused by monkeypox virus**, a member of the **Orthopoxvirus genus in the family Poxviridae**.
- The natural host of the virus remains undefined. But the disease has been reported in many animals.
 - Animals known to be sources of Monkeypox virus include **monkeys and apes, a variety of rodents** (including rats, mice, squirrels and prairie dogs) **and rabbits**.

▪ Outbreaks:

- It was first reported in 1958, in monkeys in the **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)** and in humans in 1970, also in the DRC.
- In 2017, Nigeria experienced the largest documented outbreak, 40 years after the last confirmed case.
- Subsequently, the disease has been reported in **many West and Central African countries**.

▪ Symptoms:

- Infected people break out in a **rash that looks a lot like chicken pox**. But the fever, malaise, and headache from Monkeypox **are usually more severe than in chicken pox infection**.
- In the early stage of the disease, Monkeypox **can be distinguished from smallpox because the lymph gland gets enlarged**.

▪ Transmission:

- Primary infection is through **direct contact with the blood, bodily fluids, or cutaneous or mucosal lesions of an infected animal**. Eating **inadequately cooked meat of infected animals** is also a risk factor.
- **Human-to-human transmission** can result from close contact with infected respiratory tract secretions, skin lesions of an infected person or objects recently contaminated by patient fluids or lesion materials.
- Transmission can also **occur by inoculation or via the placenta** (congenital monkeypox).

▪ Vulnerability:

- It spreads rapidly and **can cause one out of ten deaths** if infected.
- **Treatment and Vaccine:**
 - There is **no specific treatment or vaccine available** for Monkeypox infection. In the past, the **anti-smallpox vaccine was shown to be 85% effective** in preventing Monkeypox.
 - But the world was declared free of **smallpox in 1980** so the vaccine isn't widely available anymore.
 - Currently, there is **no global system in place to manage the spread of Monkeypox**, with each country struggling to contain any outbreak whenever it occurs.

Way Forward

- Improved surveillance and response, raise awareness of the disease and avoid contact with wild animals, especially monkeys.
- Any animals that might have come into contact with an infected animal should be quarantined, handled with standard precautions and observed for monkeypox symptoms for 30 days.
- It is important to refocus attention on other diseases. There is a drop in the number of reported cases of endemic diseases as people are not seeking care in health facilities, owing to [Covid-19](#).

Source: DTE

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