

Monkeypox disease a concern worldwide

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Madam, monkeypox disease, a vesicular-pustular rash similar in presentation to smallpox virus caused by Human monkeypox virus (MPXV), a zoonotic double-stranded DNA virus belongs to the Orthopoxvirus genus.¹ MPXV reservoirs have been found mainly in rodents, including Gambian pouched rats, dormice, tree squirrels, rope squirrels, and, to a lesser extent, in non-human primate species in endemic regions in Central and West Africa. The earliest recorded case of monkeypox disease in humans was in the 1970s; despite the discovery of the virus in 1958, it is believed that the indistinguishable presentation of monkeypox disease from smallpox resulted in the first case identification delay.² Since the 1970s, an increase in cases has been reported with each passing year; once confined to specific African endemic regions, it has extended intercontinental suggesting another potential pandemic threat.

The first-ever human case of monkeypox disease was reported in a 9-year-old boy in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.² The disease has been endemic with an intermittent eruption in Central and West African countries. However, the first case outside the African continent appeared in 2003 in the United States, making it a global health concern. Once again, monkeypox caught international attention when three cases were reported in the United Kingdom in September 2018 and one in Israel in October 2018.³ Lately, in May 2022, many non-endemic countries started reporting multiple cases of monkeypox disease.⁴ An increase in geographic distribution and frequency of monkeypox in recent years has proved wrong the global perspective of monkeypox as a rare disease.

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The prevalence of monkeypox in developing countries is indeed a major health issue due to limited resources and poor control. Pakistan, a country with minimal health funds and is currently going through a political turmoil and economic crisis; the monkeypox disease epidemic can cause a severe public health risk. Adequate early preventive measures can decrease the prospect of monkeypox disease getting out of control. We suggest raising awareness of risk factors among the masses to reduce exposure to the virus. Early identification and isolation of suspects, screening of close contacts and health workers., Stringent measures to screen travelers from countries with reported cases for outbreak should be taken. If taken promptly, these actions can help prevent additional disease burden on the public health sector and save the country's financial resources.

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