

South Africa's cholera death toll reaches 43

The death toll from the cholera outbreak has increased to 43, the Department of Health officially announced on Sunday.



Source: Reuters.

According to the department, South Africa has recorded 1,045 suspected cases of cholera in 15 out of 52 districts across five provinces, 197 of which were laboratory-confirmed.

Gauteng remains the hardest-hit province at 89%, with 176 cases reported in three districts.

The province is followed by the Free State, which accounts for 6%, with 11 cases reported in Fezile Dabi District, while the North West has logged five infections. Limpopo has logged four cases, and one has been reported in Mpumalanga.

The department explained that a confirmed case is a laboratory-confirmed presence of cholera bacteria called *Vibrio cholerae* in any patient with diarrhoea.

"A suspected case of cholera is a person of any age with or dying from acute watery diarrhoea with or without vomiting. In areas where a cholera outbreak has been declared, any person presenting with or dying from acute watery diarrhoea meets the criteria of a suspected case," the department explained.

The case fatality, according to the department, stands at 3.5%.

Meanwhile, in terms of the age distribution of cholera cases, the age group of 41 to 50 years accounts for 23% (46/197) of cases, followed by 31 to 40 years at 17% (33/197) and 51 to 60 years at 12% (23/197).

“The Department of Health is pleased with the progress made with regards to concerted efforts of interventions put in place to curb the transmission of cholera disease and mortality rate, which have significantly declined in the past few weeks around the country.”

Focus on prevention

The department said the focus has been on preventing further person-to-person transmission of the disease, which has contributed to detecting laboratory-confirmed infections in most areas, especially where there is no reported cholera outbreak.

It is appealing to the public to maintain strict compliance with personal hygiene, especially during food preparation at social gatherings and funerals.

The department noted that the majority of positive cases and deaths had causal links with funeral service attendance in the outbreak communities.

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