Monkeypox cases reported in the WHO European Region

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Over the last week, monkeypox cases have been reported in the WHO European Region in several countries.

Monkeypox is a rare viral disease that usually occurs in forested parts of central and west Africa, where the animal reservoir lives.

Monkeypox is transmitted during close contact between individuals (via infected skin lesions, exhaled droplets or body fluids) including sexual contact, or through contact with contaminated materials.

The disease is often self-limiting, with symptoms usually resolving within 14–21 days. Symptoms can be mild but the infectious lesions it causes can be itchy or painful – occasionally infection can be more severe.

While the number of cases in the Region is still relatively small, what is concerning is that some of the cases appear to have been acquired in the Region without a link to travel to countries where monkeypox is known to be endemic. In addition, many cases have been detected in clinics specialized in sexually transmitted infections. It is not clear at this stage what the extent of wider community transmission is, but it is likely that more cases will be identified in the coming days.

WHO is working with concerned countries – facilitating information sharing and supporting case detection and event investigation. It continues to closely monitor the rapidly evolving situation and will be producing updated editions of Disease Outbreak News on monkeypox as new information becomes available.

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