

Boy dies of bubonic plague in Kyrgyzstan

August 26 2013

A teenage boy has died of bubonic plague in Kyrgyzstan, the country's health officials confirmed Monday, adding that an epidemic was not likely.

The 15-year-old was a herder from a small mountain village of Ichke-Zhergez in eastern Kyrgyzstan, close to the border with Kazakhstan and the Issyk-Kul lake.

He died last Thursday in the Karakol regional hospital, the ministry said in a statement.

"After a meeting of doctors, he was diagnosed with bubonic plague," the statement said. His body was cremated and remains were buried with special precautions.

"We suspect that the patient was infected with the plague through the bite of a flea," Tolo Isakov, a ministry official who heads the sanitation department, said at a briefing in Bishkek Monday.

The oriental rat flea carries the bubonic plague after biting an infected rodent and may then pass the disease to a human. Officials have dispatched two teams to the area to "catch, exterminate, and study rodents," Isakov said.

He added that the last recorded case of bubonic plague occurred in Kyrgyzstan 30 years ago.

Health Minister Dinara Saginbayeva aimed to dispel fears of an epidemic.

"There will not be a [bubonic plague](#) epidemic," she said. "The form of the disease in the teenager is not conducive to a [plague epidemic](#). So there are no grounds for closing the borders."

Officials have hospitalised and isolated 105 people who have had contact with the deceased, including doctors and medical staff that treated the boy, the minister said. Doctors are also administering antibiotics in the area, she said.

Bubonic plague is a [bacterial infection](#) that is a strain of the "Black Death," a [virulent disease](#) that killed tens of millions of people in 14th century Europe. Primarily an [animal disease](#), it is extremely rare in humans.

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Citation: Boy dies of bubonic plague in Kyrgyzstan (2013, August 26) retrieved 4 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-08-boy-dies-bubonic-plague-kyrgyzstan.html>

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