

Meningitis epidemic kills 45 in Niger

April 4 2015

A meningitis epidemic that broke out in January in Niger has so far killed 45 people, the health minister told AFP on Saturday.

"From January 1 to March 29, 2015, some 345 cases of meningitis, including 45 fatalities, have been reported, which is a [fatality rate](#) of 15.3 percent," the minister, Mano Aghali, said.

The capital Niamey is one of the hardest hit areas, with 18 deaths among 119 cases, while neighbouring Dosso has seen 18 deaths from 157 cases, Aghali said. All regions, except Diffa in the southeast, have seen cases.

But "the situation is under control," he said

Niger has distributed 13,500 doses of the vaccine and medicines are being administered free of charge within zones suffering from the epidemic.

Niger, one of the world's [poorest countries](#), is frequently prone to meningitis epidemics.

The disease—an inflammation of the lining around the brain and spinal cord—can cause death within hours. It is usually bacterial or viral and occasionally is due to [fungal infections](#), although almost any microbe can cause it.

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