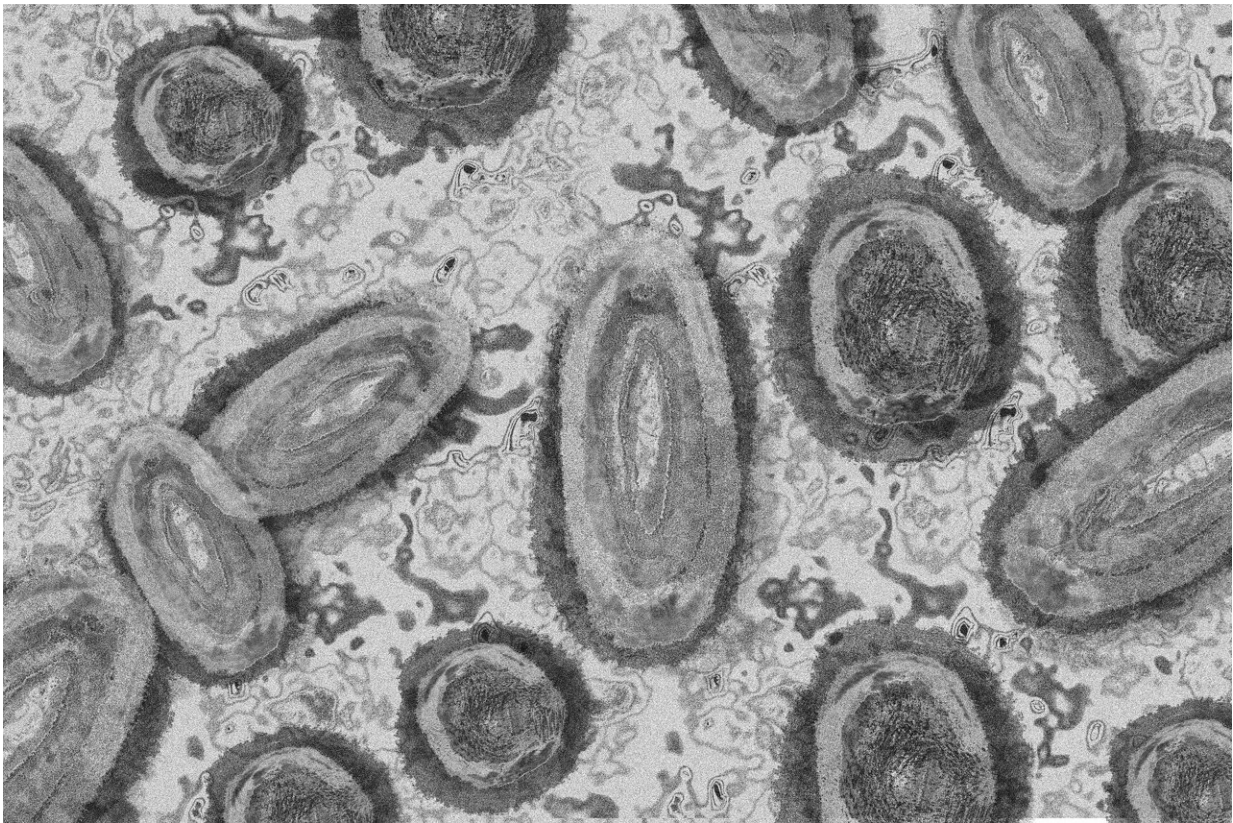


Monkeypox kills 9 in Congo; first death in Nigeria in 2022

May 30 2022, by Chinedu Asadu and Jean-Yves Kamale



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

Nine people have died of monkeypox in Congo in 2022 while Nigeria has recorded its first death from the disease this year, the countries' health authorities said, even as at least 20 countries continue to grapple

with sudden outbreaks not seen in years.

Dr. Aime Alongo, chief of the Sankuru health division in Congo, said Monday that 465 cases of the disease have been confirmed in the nation, making it one of the worst-hit in West and Central Africa, where the disease is endemic.

The persistence of the disease in Congo is due to the consumption of dead monkeys and rodents, Dr. Alongo said.

"The residents enter the forest, pick up the corpses of monkeys, bats and rodents which are the reservoirs of monkeypox," the official added, urging those with monkeypox symptoms to visit a health center to isolate themselves.

Nigeria, meanwhile, recorded its first death from monkeypox this year in a patient with underlying medical conditions, the diseases control agency said Sunday.

The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention announced that in 2022 it has confirmed 21 out of 66 suspected cases of the disease, which is usually endemic in Nigeria and other parts of West and Central Africa.

"The death was reported in a 40-year-old patient who had underlying comorbidity and was on immunosuppressive medications," the Nigeria CDC said.

Nigeria has not had an outbreak of monkeypox since September 2017 but it continues to report sporadic cases. At least 247 have been confirmed in 22 of its 36 states since then with 3.6% fatality rate, the disease control agency said.

A spike in monkeypox cases reported in Europe and the U.S. has generated concerns among those countries, many of whom have not recorded a single case of the disease in years. Over 250 cases of the disease have been reported in more than 20 countries not usually known to have outbreaks, the World Health Organization said.

Monkeypox has not previously triggered widespread outbreaks beyond Africa, where it is endemic.

One of the new cases in the U.K. was recorded in a man days after his arrival from Nigeria on May 4. Nigeria has recorded six confirmed cases of the disease the British citizen left the country.

Dr. Ifedayo Adetifa, head of the country's Center for Disease Control, told The Associated Press nothing shows that the British citizen contracted the disease in Nigeria and the country remains prepared to respond to an outbreak of monkeypox.

"The biggest challenge that you have with a disease such as monkeypox is that it is uncommon and the perceived risk by the population about how dangerous this condition is has been very low ... that is why ... we have conducted awareness training and advocacy training to increase the level of awareness of health care workers," Adetifa said.

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