

Tanzania identifies mystery illness as 'rat fever'

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A mysterious disease that killed three people in Tanzania has been identified as leptospirosis or "rat fever", a bacterial infection commonly spread by the rodents, the East African nation's government said Monday.

Last week authorities dispatched a team of doctors and experts to the southeastern region of Lindi where 20 cases have been reported, including the three people who died.

Health minister Ummy Mwalimu who visited the area said the disease was caused by a bacteria which spread through consuming water or food contaminated by infected animal urine.

"A good thing is that this disease is preventable and curable," she said, urging people to remain calm.

Most of the patients have recovered from the illness, whose symptoms include fever, headaches, fatigue and nosebleeds. Two people remain in isolation, she said.

All patients have tested negative for Ebola and Marburg, as well as Covid-19.

Tanzania's President Samia Suluhu Hassan said last week the "strange" disease reported in Lindi may have been caused by "growing interaction" between humans and [wild animals](#) as a result of environmental

degradation.

Ghana on Sunday reported its first ever cases of the Marburg virus, which belongs to the same family as Ebola and has symptoms including [high fever](#) and internal and external bleeding.

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