

# Mexico: Deadly meningitis outbreak caused by anesthetics

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Mexico's Public Health Department said Thursday that a worrisome outbreak of 61 meningitis cases in the northern state of Durango this month was linked to anesthetic procedures used at local hospitals.

At least a dozen people have died and a dozen more are listed in serious condition because of the meningitis outbreak.

"This disease was not passed from person to person," the department said in a statement. "This is a case where the infection was (spread) directly into the [central nervous system](#) through anesthetic procedures."

The department blamed contamination, but said it was too early to tell whether the anesthetic medication itself, or the way it was handled, was to blame for the infections.

"It would be speculating to attribute the cases to the bottles used or stored or applied as anesthetics to patients," said Assistant Health Secretary Hugo López-Gatell, adding investigations were under way.

The majority of those infected were women undergoing obstetric procedures. All the patients received a type of anesthesia known as a spinal block.

It was the latest scandal for Mexico's woefully under-equipped public health care system, which has also had recurring difficulties in supplying medications for children with cancer.

In 2020, 14 people died after a hospital run by Mexico's state-owned oil company gave a drug to [dialysis patients](#) that was contaminated with bacteria. More than 69 [patients](#) were sickened in that outbreak.

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