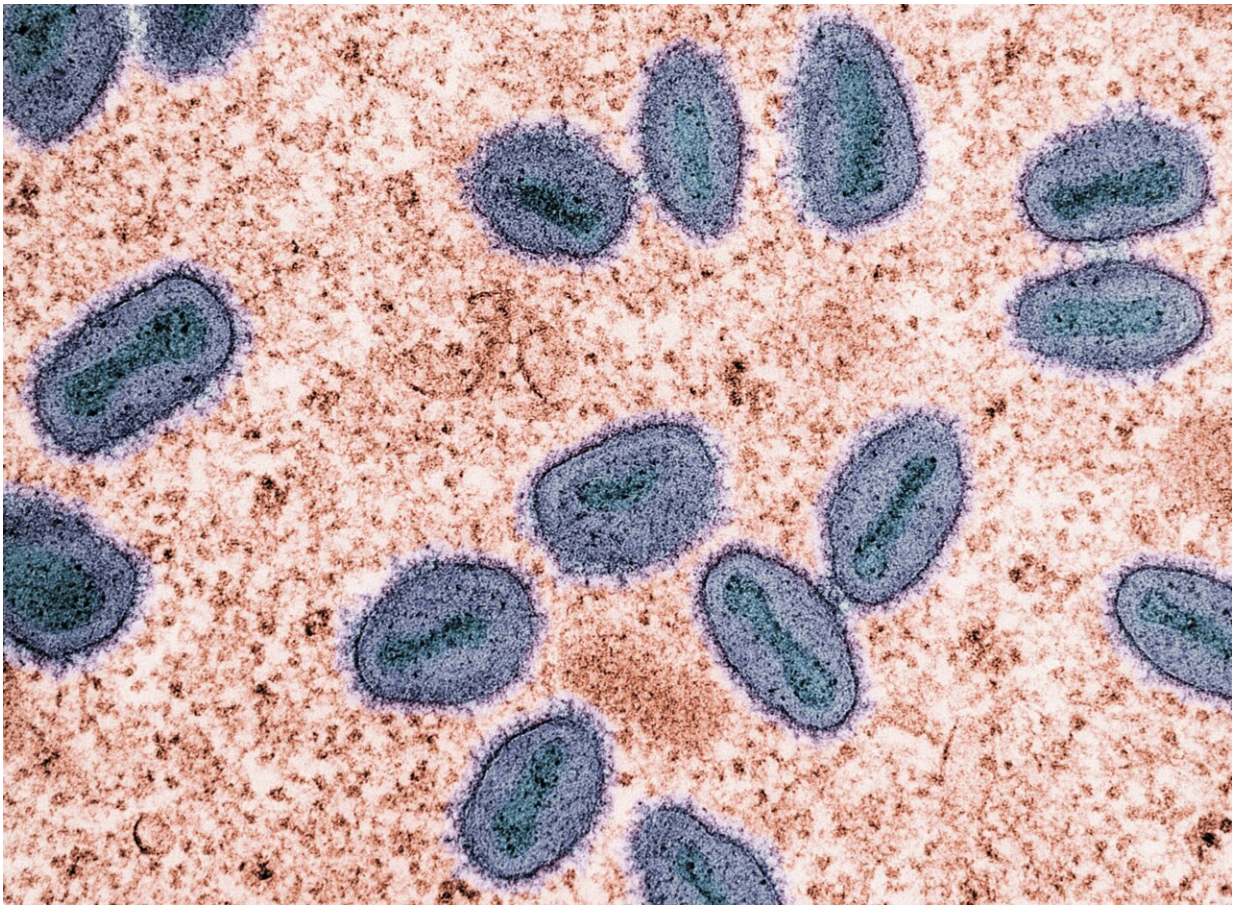


One dead as mpox outbreak hits South Africa

June 12 2024



Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

An outbreak of mpox has killed one person and infected four more in South Africa, the government said on Wednesday, adding it was trying to

secure more treatment drugs as a precaution.

The five cases, reported between May 8 and June 7, were the first recorded in the country since 2022, Health Minister Joe Phaahla told reporters.

"One [death](#) is too many, especially from a preventable and manageable disease," Phaahla said, urging those with suspected symptoms to seek [medical attention](#) and help trace contacts.

Previously known as monkeypox, mpox is a viral illness transmitted through close contact with infected humans or animals, as well as via materials such as contaminated sheets.

The disease causes painful and scarring lesions, principally to the face, anus and genitals.

Common [symptoms](#) include a skin rash, fever, headache, muscle aches and swollen [lymph nodes](#), according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

Mpox was first discovered in humans in 1970 in the Democratic Republic of Congo, with the spread since then mainly limited to certain West and Central African nations.

But in May 2022, infections surged worldwide, mostly among men who have sex with men, leading the WHO to declare it a global health emergency.

The UN agency ended the alert last year but low-level transmission of mpox continues across the world.

More than 97,000 cases and 186 deaths were reported across 117

countries in the first four months of 2024, according to the WHO.

Phaahla said that all those recently infected in South Africa were men in their 30s.

Their cases were classified as severe. Two remain in hospital, he said.

"Our intention is to obtain a stockpile of Tecovirimat treatment for rapid deployment in case the current situation leads to a wider outbreak," Phaahla said, referring to an antiviral drug.

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