# Pakistan faces resurgence of cholera amid global outbreak linked to climate challenges



Pakistan is currently contending with a resurgence of cholera amidst a historic global surge in outbreaks linked to the ongoing seventh cholera pandemic. This resurgence has been observed particularly between 2022 and 2023, a period during which the World Health Organisation (WHO) has reported an unprecedented increase in cholera cases worldwide, including in countries previously free of the disease for years or those that had invested extensively in control measures.

At least 30 countries had active cholera outbreaks as of April 2023, with an additional 20 countries bordering affected areas considered to be at high risk of transmission. According to the WHO, over one billion people globally are now directly at risk of contracting cholera.

In Pakistan, cholera re-emerged prominently in 2022 with significant outbreaks documented in regions such as Balochistan, Sindh, and southern Punjab. These outbreaks followed climate-related disasters, notably flooding, which disrupted access to safe drinking water. The recurrent and increasing intensity of extreme weather events—including floods, droughts, and subsequent displacement—has been identified as a direct factor contributing to the resurgence of waterborne diseases like cholera. The WHO has described the current wave as “larger, deadlier, and more widespread than previous outbreaks,” warning of high mortality rates and the spread of cholera into areas previously considered cholera-free for extended periods.

Cholera is a severe diarrhoeal illness caused by the ingestion of food or water contaminated with the bacteria Vibrio cholerae. Without prompt treatment, it can be fatal within hours. The disease tends to affect populations living in poverty, those experiencing conflict, and communities with poor sanitation, limited access to clean water, and fragile healthcare systems—conditions that unfortunately persist in parts of Pakistan despite ongoing health sector reforms.

In 2022 alone, Pakistan’s Ministry of National Health Services, along with provincial health departments, reported thousands of suspected cholera cases, particularly in districts affected by floods. The National Institute of Health (NIH) in Islamabad responded by issuing health alerts and deploying emergency teams to prevent further spread, especially in urban slums and displaced populations residing in camps lacking proper sanitation facilities.

Health experts emphasize that timely diagnosis and intervention, primarily through the administration of Oral Rehydration Salts (ORS) and Oral Cholera Vaccines (OCVs), can avert the majority of fatalities associated with cholera. However, challenges remain. A shortage of investment in water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure, coupled with the pressures exerted by the Covid-19 pandemic and ongoing inflationary pressures, has left numerous communities vulnerable to repeated cycles of cholera outbreaks.

The News International is reporting these developments amid growing concerns over the public health implications of climate change and infrastructure deficits in Pakistan and similar affected countries globally.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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