# Pakistan faces severe cholera resurgence amid global outbreak crisis



Pakistan is currently grappling with a resurgence of cholera amid a historic global surge in outbreaks marking the ongoing 7th cholera pandemic. Between 2022 and 2023, the world has witnessed an unprecedented rise in cholera outbreaks, including in countries such as Pakistan, Lebanon, Syria, and Haiti, some of which had not reported cases in years or had invested substantially in multisectoral control strategies.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recently issued a call for urgent action, noting that by April 2023, at least 30 countries reported active cholera outbreaks. Furthermore, an additional 20 countries sharing land borders with affected regions are considered at significant risk of transmission. The WHO estimates that collectively more than 1 billion people worldwide now face direct risk from cholera.

In Pakistan, the disease re-emerged prominently in 2022, with outbreaks concentrated in provinces including Balochistan, Sindh, and southern Punjab. These outbreaks followed climate-induced disasters such as severe flooding and disruption to safe drinking water supplies. The increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events—including floods, droughts, and consequent displacement—have directly contributed to the resurgence of waterborne diseases like cholera. The WHO describes this current wave as “larger, deadlier, and more widespread than previous outbreaks,” warning that it is spreading in regions previously regarded as cholera-free for years and carrying high mortality rates, posing a direct threat to global health security.

Cholera is a severe diarrheal disease caused by consuming food or water contaminated with the bacterium Vibrio cholerae. If untreated, it can cause death within hours. The disease predominantly affects communities with conditions such as poverty, conflict, poor sanitation, limited access to safe water, and fragile health systems—circumstances that persist in certain communities within Pakistan despite years of health sector reform.

In 2022, Pakistan’s Ministry of National Health Services, along with provincial health departments, reported thousands of suspected cholera cases, particularly in districts affected by flooding. The National Institute of Health (NIH) in Islamabad issued health alerts and dispatched emergency response teams to curb further spread, especially in urban slums and displaced populations confined in camps lacking proper sanitation facilities.

Health experts have emphasised that timely diagnosis and treatment—primarily through Oral Rehydration Salts (ORS) and Oral Cholera Vaccines (OCVs)—can avert most deaths from cholera. Nonetheless, inadequate investment in water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure, alongside the additional pressures related to the Covid-19 pandemic and prevailing economic inflation, has left many Pakistani communities vulnerable to recurrent cycles of this disease.

The News International reports that the current situation represents a significant challenge for Pakistan’s public health system, highlighting the complex interplay of environmental, infrastructural, and socioeconomic factors underpinning the cholera resurgence.

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

## Bibliography

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