

# Mpox clade Ib: epidemiological highlights from the Uvira outbreak, South Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo, 2024-2025

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## Background

A novel clade Ib monkeypox virus emerged in South Kivu Province (Democratic Republic of the Congo) in 2023, causing an ongoing mpox outbreak. Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) Operational Centre Amsterdam supported mpox case management in collaboration with the Ministry of Health (MOH). We describe main clinical and epidemiological characteristics of patients.

## Methods

MOH case definitions were used. All confirmed and probable mpox cases seen at MSF-supported facilities between 3 June 2024 and 31 March 2025 were included. Samples were tested with qPCR. Data were collected using the MSF-linelist, and included demographic and clinical information and risk factors for transmission. We calculated frequencies and percentages for the main epidemiological indicators.

## Results

4,614 cases were treated, 1327 (28%) as inpatients, 2398 (51%) were female (including 42 (1%) pregnant women), 2869 (62%) were under 15 years of age, and 1530 (33%) were under 5 (17% of Uvira population are under 5). There were 8 deaths (case fatality 0.2%), including five in children aged less than one year. A total of 17/3689 patients (0.5%) had HIV infection, 8/4416 (0.2%) self-reported TB and 29/562 (5%) had severe/moderate acute malnutrition. Laboratory results were available for 934 cases (20%), of which 565 were confirmed (positivity: 60%). Forty-nine samples tested for subclade were all confirmed as Ib. Overall 912/1793 patients (51%) reported physical non-sexual contact with another case, and 48/1779 (3%) reported sexual contact. Median time from symptom onset to presentation was 4 days (IQR: 2-6), and among inpatients, median length of stay was 5 days (IQR: 4-7).

## Conclusion

We describe a large case series of mpox clade Ib patients for whom transmission appears largely non-sexual. Despite low fatality and severity, the high proportion of cases and deaths among children and the high burden of cases remains a concern in areas with an already fragile population health and overwhelmed health-care systems.

We describe key indicators to better understand the epidemiology of the novel monkeypox virus clade Ib and to inform outbreak response activities.

