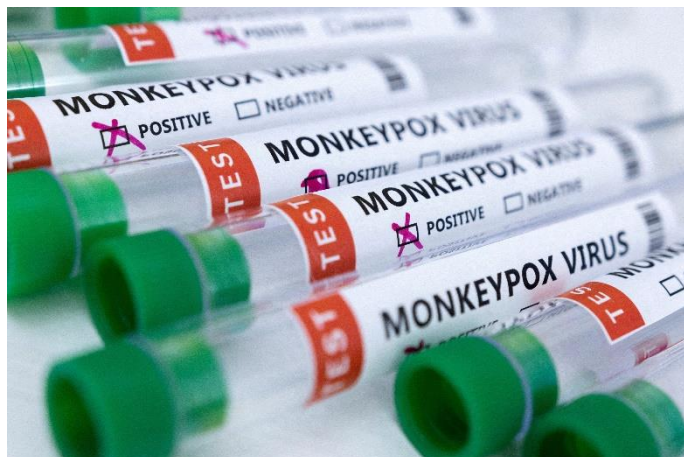


MONKEYPOX, GLOBAL HEALTH EMERGENCY

WHO declares global health emergency over monkeypox outbreak



Test tubes labeled "Monkeypox virus positive and negative" are seen in this illustration taken May 23, 2022. REUTERS/Dado Ruvic/Illustration/File Photo

The rapidly spreading monkeypox outbreak represents a **global health emergency**, the World Health Organization's (WHO) highest level of alert, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said on Saturday, July 23, 2022.

The WHO label - a "public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC)" - is designed to trigger a coordinated international response and could unlock funding to collaborate on sharing vaccines and treatments.

Members of an expert committee that met on Thursday, July 21, 2022 to discuss the potential recommendation were split on the decision, with nine members against and six in favour of the declaration, prompting Tedros himself to break the deadlock, he told reporters.

"Although I am declaring a public health emergency of international concern, for the moment this is an outbreak that is concentrated among men who have sex with men, especially those with multiple sexual partners," Tedros told a media briefing in Geneva.

Stigma and discrimination can be as dangerous as any virus," he added.

He said the risk of monkeypox - which spreads via close contact and tends to cause flu-like symptoms and pus-filled skin lesions - was moderate globally, except in the Europe, where the WHO has deemed the risk as high. [read more](#)

Some 16,000 cases of monkeypox

So far this year, there have been more than 16,000 cases of monkeypox in more than 75 countries, and five deaths in Africa.

Cases of the viral disease have ballooned since the committee first met at the end of June, when there were only about 3,000 cases.

At the time, the expert group agreed to reconsider their position on the emergency declaration if the outbreak escalated.

One of the key issues driving a reassessment was whether cases would spread to other groups, particularly children or others who have been vulnerable to the virus in past outbreaks in endemic countries.

On Friday, July 22, 2022 the United States identified its first two monkeypox cases in children. WHO officials said on Saturday, July 23, 2022 they were exploring the possibility of the virus spreading via new modes of transmission. -**Reuters.com, Geneva, July 23, 2022**

