

Infectious Pertussis disease rising in the Philippines with 54 deaths



The Philippines' Department of Health (DOH) on Tuesday (April 9, 2024) said the contagious bacterial disease called pertussis continues to spread in the country, noting that 54 children have died from the respiratory disease, reported Xinhua news agency.

From Jan 1 to March 30, 2024 the DOH tallied 1,112 cases, or “almost 34 times that of the same period last year”, with 54 deaths.

“All 54 deaths are less than five years old,” DOH Assistant Secretary Albert Domingo told reporters.

In the past six weeks, Domingo said the DOH noted “a continuous increase in the number of pertussis cases” in five regions in the main Luzon island, the central and the southern Philippines.

“Of the total pertussis cases thus far recorded, 77 per cent were less than five years old. Adults, aged 20 and older, account for only around four per cent of the cases,” he added.

According to Domingo, the number of cases “may still change as there may be late consultations and reports.”

Pertussis, or whooping cough, is a highly contagious disease caused by the bacterium *Bordetella pertussis*. It spreads quickly from person to person, mainly through droplets produced by coughing or sneezing.

The disease can cause complications and even threaten lives, especially for babies. The best way to prevent pertussis is through immunisation.

The DOH has urged parents to have their infants as young as six weeks old vaccinated.

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