

Man dies of bubonic plague in Mongolia

12 August 2020

Bubonic plague has killed a man in western Mongolia, the country's health ministry said Wednesday, the latest in a handful of cases to emerge there and in neighbouring China this year.

At least one person dies of the [plague](#) every year in the landlocked Asian country, where the rare bacterial disease is usually spread by fleas clinging to the hair of the marmots native to the region.

The government has responded with campaigns to discourage people from eating the large rodents.

Officials said a man died on Tuesday night in the latest case, which is still to be confirmed by [laboratory tests](#).

More than 70 people in close contact with the 42-year-old, who had bought two dead marmots before he fell ill, will now be tested and undergo quarantine.

It comes weeks after a 15-year-old boy also succumbed to the disease in a neighbouring province of Mongolia.

Health officials in China have also reported two similar deaths from its side of the border this month—one from bubonic plague, and another caused by the rare pharyngeal plague.

The recent cases prompted Russia's nearby Buryatia region to test rodents for the [bubonic plague](#) and urge residents not to hunt or eat marmots.

Hunting the mammals is illegal in Mongolia, but many people in rural areas believe that their meat is good for health.

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