

AN OVERVIEW OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASES: TYPES, TRANSMISSION AND SYMPTOMS

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ABOUT THE STUDY

Communicable diseases are illnesses caused by infectious agents that can be transmitted from one person to another, from animals to humans, or from a surface to humans. These diseases can spread through the air, water, food, or contact with bodily fluids, and can range from mild to severe or even life-threatening. In this article, we will discuss the different types of communicable diseases, their transmission, symptoms, prevention, and treatment. While there have been achievements in controlling infectious diseases, new diseases and organisms continue to emerge, making it important to remain vigilant. Vaccines and good hygiene practices are important in preventing infectious diseases. Surveillance and control of communicable diseases are important in protecting the public's health. Understanding the causes of communicable diseases and ways to prevent their spread is essential since everyone is likely to be affected by them at some point in their life.

Types of communicable diseases

There are several types of communicable diseases caused by different pathogens, including viruses, bacteria, fungi, and protozoa.

Viruses: Viruses are the most common pathogens that cause communicable diseases. They are small infectious agents that can only replicate inside a living host cell. Examples of common viral communicable diseases includes;

Respiratory viruses: Rhinovirus, influenza virus, coronavirus, and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV).

Sexually transmitted viruses: Human Papillomavirus (HPV), Herpes Simplex Virus (HSV), and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).

Bloodborne viruses: Hepatitis B and C virus (HBV and HCV).

Bacteria: Bacteria are single-celled organisms that can cause a range of communicable diseases. They can be found in soil, water, and the human body. Examples of common bacterial communicable diseases include;

Foodborne bacteria: *Salmonella*, *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*), and *Listeria monocytogenes*.

Sexually transmitted bacteria: Chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis.

Airborne bacteria: Mycobacterium Tuberculosis (TB).

Fungi: Fungi are organisms that can cause infectious diseases in humans, particularly those with a weakened immune system. Examples of common fungal communicable diseases include;

Skin infections: Ringworm, athlete's foot, and jock itch.

Lung infections: *Aspergillosis* and *Cryptococcosis*.

Systemic infections: Candidiasis and Histoplasmosis.

Protozoa: Protozoa are single-celled organisms that can cause communicable diseases in humans. Examples of common protozoan communicable diseases include;

Malaria: Caused by Plasmodium parasites and transmitted by infected mosquitoes.

Toxoplasmosis: Caused by Toxoplasma Gondii and transmitted by consuming contaminated food or water.

Giardiasis: Caused by Giardia Intestinalis and transmitted by consuming contaminated water.

Transmission of communicable diseases: Communicable diseases can be transmitted through various means, including;

Airborne transmission: When an infected person coughs or sneezes, releasing droplets containing the virus or bacteria into the air. These

droplets can be breathed in by others and cause infection.

Direct contact: When an infected person comes into contact with an uninfected person's bodily fluids, such as blood, saliva, or semen. This can occur during sexual contact or by sharing needles for drug use.

Indirect contact: when an uninfected person touches a surface contaminated with the virus or bacteria, such as a doorknob, and then touches their face, mouth, or nose.

Vector-borne transmission: When an infected insect or animal, such as a mosquito or tick, bites a human and transmits the pathogen into their bloodstream.

Symptoms of communicable diseases: The symptoms of communicable diseases can vary depending on the specific disease and the pathogen causing it. Some common symptoms include; fever, fatigue, coughing, sneezing, body aches, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, skin rash, sore throat, headaches.

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