

## News & Comments

# Monkeypox is a global health emergency, according to the WHO

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In 74 countries, almost 17,000 people have been affected by monkeypox, which has been declared a global health emergency of international concern by WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

Globally and in all regions, WHO deems monkeypox a moderate risk, except in the European region where we assess it as high. Two sources who spoke to Reuters earlier said the expert committee split on the decision on Thursday, but the final decision rests with the UN agency's director-general. Tedros confirmed during a media briefing in Geneva that the committee had failed to reach a consensus, with nine members opposing the declaration and six in favor. According to sources, Tedros has typically endorsed recommendations from expert committees, but due to concerns about escalating case rates and a shortage of vaccines and treatments, he likely backed the highest alert level despite the lack of a majority opinion. A tally published on 22 July by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows that more than 16,800 people have been affected by monkeypox in 74 countries. In the recent outbreak, the virus has spread mainly among men who have sex with men outside Africa, where it is endemic, and usually causes flu-like symptoms and pus-filled skin lesions. Infections of monkeypox have surged outside West and Central African countries where the disease is long endemic since early May. Around a third of those infected visited sex-on-site venues such as sex parties or saunas within the past month, with 98 percent of infected people being gay or bisexual men. With the right strategies in the right groups, it can be stopped among men who have sex with men, especially those with multiple partners. In his message, Tedros urged all countries to "work closely with communities of men who have sex with men, to provide effective information and services, and to adopt measures that protect" these communities.

### KEYWORDS

Who, monkeypox, public health, Tedros, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention CDC, global health emergency, emergency, emergency committee

