# Two Men in South Africa Die from MPOX, Fueling Local Transmission Concerns



South African health authorities have reported two deaths linked to mpox (formerly known as monkeypox) this week. A 38-year-old man in KwaZulu-Natal succumbed to the disease on the same day his infection was confirmed, while another man died on Monday near Johannesburg. Both individuals were part of six recent mpox cases in the country, all involving men in their 30s with multiple sexual partners. Genetic tests indicated a less severe strain of mpox, fueling local transmission concerns as none of the affected individuals had traveled to outbreak regions. All six cases involved underlying health conditions, with the latest fatality also affected by HIV.

Mpox, caused by a virus related to smallpox, became a global concern after spreading to Europe, North America, and beyond in 2022. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared it a global emergency but lifted this status last year. Since 2022, there have been 186 global mpox deaths, with a fatality rate of less than 1%. Though South Africa has no current vaccines, authorities are considering acquiring doses for immunization.

Simultaneously, France secured 200,000 doses of avian influenza vaccines from the EU’s order of 665,000 to prevent human transmission. This move follows reports of human cases in Australia, Mexico, and the US, with vaccinations planned for at-risk livestock farmers and veterinarians. The decision comes amid concerns over the potential spread from migratory birds carrying the virus.