Bubonic plague

Bubonic plague is a rare but serious zoonotic disease. It is caused by bacterial infection and transmitted by fleas from rodents.

It mainly results from the bite of an infected flea, and also from exposure to the body fluids from a dead plague-infected animal. There are no reports of human to human transmission of bubonic plague.

It is one of the three plagues caused by bacterium Yersinia pestis. The other two being Septicaemic plague and Pneumonic plague. According to the WHO it can kill an adult in less than 24 hours, if not treated in time.

Vaccine for the bubonic plague is available for individuals with high exposure to the plague. Recently a city in northern China sounded an alert after a suspected case of bubonic plague or ‘Black Death’ was reported.