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Recurrent Anthrax Outbreak associated with consumption of meat from livestock that died suddenly, Kanungu District, Uganda, 2025–2026

Inhalt

Background: Following Kanungu District's first-ever anthrax outbreak in 2024, a resurgence of laboratory-confirmed cases was reported in late 2025 and early 2026. We investigated to determine the magnitude of the outbreak and identify risk factors for transmission.

Methods: A confirmed case was any suspected case with confirmed *Bacillus anthracis* by PCR. We identified cases through medical record reviews and community searches. We conducted hypothesis-generating interviews and used a 1:4 unmatched case-control study to identify factors associated with illness.

Results: Among 52 cases (42 suspected, 10 confirmed) from October 2025–March 2026, there was one death (CFR=2%). The overall attack rate (AR) was 17/100,000. Males (AR: 28/100,000), persons aged ≥ 15 years (AR: 24/100,000), and Nyamirama Sub county (AR: 86/100,000) were most affected. Three of 5 cattle samples and 10 of 12 human samples were PCR-positive for *Bacillus anthracis*. Eating meat from livestock that died suddenly (aOR=6.4, 95% CI: 2.3–17) and male sex (aOR=5.1, 95% CI: 1.4–19) were associated with anthrax. There was a 37-day delay in detection.

Conclusion: Kanungu District experienced a recurrent anthrax outbreak associated with consumption of meat from livestock that died suddenly; delayed detection enabled ongoing human exposure and transmission. We recommend community education against consuming meat from sudden-death animals and immediate reporting of animal deaths to improve detection.

Keywords

Anthrax, Outbreak, Risk factors, Epidemiology, Uganda

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Professional Status of the Speaker

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Yes, I am a Junior Scientist.

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