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Media alert from the Media Scanning & Verification Cell, IDSP-NCDC.

Alert ID	Publication Date	Reporting Date	Place Name	News Source/Publication Language
4572	23.03.2018	23.03.2018	Kutch Gujarat	www.timesofindia.com/English https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/rajkot/kutch-grappling-with-measles-outbreak/articleshow/63420696.cms
Title:	Kutch grappling with measles outbreak, Gujarat			
Action By CSU, IDSP -NCDC	Information communicated to DSU- Kutch, SSU-Gujarat			

Country's largest district is grappling with a measles outbreak with 90 cases being recorded in first two-and-half months of 2018. As many as 15 cases were registered in Kutch on Thursday itself. The number of measles cases for calender year 2017 was 257 as per the health department records.

Local doctors claim that rise in measles cases was mainly because of lack of immunisation among newborn babies as there are some superstitions and myths associated with it among certain communities.

A child is to be vaccinated for measles at the age of nine month and after 22-23 months. But in many cases people don't take their children for vaccination. According to latest National Family Health Survey (NFHS) report for 2015-16, only 45% children between the ages of 12 and 23 months are fully immunized in Kutch. For Gujarat state, the figure stands at 50%.

On Thursday, a 17-year-old youth was admitted in a hospital at Nakhatrana in Kutch, while a 10-year-old boy with measles was brought to Bhuj hospital on Thursday. Generally children under five years of age are affected by the disease, but in Kutch teenage boys and girls too are coming to hospital with this infection. According to local doctors, the number of

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**Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP), National Centre for Disease Control,
Ministry Of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India**

22-Sham Nath Marg, Delhi – 110 054

For more information please contact: Media Scanning & Verification Cell: - Phone (011)23946029

Email: - idsppediaalert@gmail.com, idspp-misc@nic.in, idspp-npo@nic.in

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infected persons could be more as many do not come to hospitals because of superstition and blind beliefs.

Kutch district epidemic control officer Dr Arunkumar Kurmi said, "Highest number of cases, i.e. 29 were registered in Bhuj taluka in last two-and-a-half months followed by Mundra (15) and Gandhidham (13)."

A paediatrician in Bhuj Dr Saroj Gupta said she received more cases compared to last year. "On an average I get at least three cases of measles everyday, most of them children. The spread is mainly because of lack of awareness among the people about immunisation," Gupta told TOI.

Another paediatrician Dr Rajesh Maheshwari, who practices in Gandhidham town, said, "There is a belief among certain Muslim communities that vaccination leads to infertility and that's why they don't bring child for vaccination. While in some Hindus communities people believe that measles is not a disease but fury of goddess and they need not go to the doctor."

"We need to make people aware that this is a deadly disease and infected persons can lose his life," he added.

A member of World Health Organization (WHO) Dr Amol Bhosle, who works in Kutch district, refused to comment and Kutch district collector Remya Mohan could not be contacted despite several attempts.

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