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UK

WHO Warns of ‘Unusual’ Surge in Severe Myocarditis in Babies



Stock photo of the feet of a new-born. (Fred Dufour /AFP via Getty Images)

By Owen Evans

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Print

UK authorities are investigating an “unusual” surge in severe myocarditis which has hit 15 babies in Wales and England and has killed at least one, the World Health Organisation has announced.

On Tuesday, the WHO issued an alert that there had been a rise in “severe myocarditis” in newborns and infants between June 2022 and March 2023 in Wales and England.

It said that this was associated with the enterovirus infection, which rarely affects the heart.

A UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) spokesperson confirmed to The Epoch Times that 10 babies have been diagnosed in Wales and five have been diagnosed in England.

The WHO said that “although enterovirus infections are common in neonates and young infants, the reported increase in myocarditis with severe outcomes in neonates and infants associated with enterovirus infection is unusual.”

It said that in the same hospital (covering the South Wales region) over the previous six years, “only one other similar case has been identified.”

WHO assessed the public health risk as low, but added that in certain situations, it “may be advisable to close child-care facilities and schools to reduce the intensity of transmission.”

However, the WHO took down the alert on Wednesday. The Epoch Times understands that this could be because some of the numbers were not correct.

23

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The WHO did not respond to The Epoch Times' request for comment.

Investigation

Authorities in England and Wales are currently investigating the rise in cases.

Dr. Shamez Ladhani, Consultant Paediatrician at UKHSA, told The Epoch Times by email that “given a higher than average number of cases in Wales in the autumn/winter months in very young babies, UKHSA is investigating the situation in England to see if any similar cases have been observed here and whether there are any factors driving the increase in cases.”

The UKHSA did not respond to questions about ruling out any links to the effects of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Public Health Wales at the start of May announced that it was investigating a cluster of severe enterovirus infections with myocarditis occurring in very young babies from the South Wales region.

The cases occurred from June 2022 with a peak in November 2022 involving babies under 28 days old.

Ten babies have developed myocarditis within this cluster. One baby remains in hospital, eight are being managed as outpatients, and one baby has died.

‘Massive Question’

Consultant pathologist and HART member Dr. Clare Craig told The Epoch Times that there’s “a massive question about whether or not these babies or the mums are vaccinated.”

HART is an organisation that was set up to share concerns about policy and guidance recommendations relating to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Coxsackievirus is a member of a family of viruses called enteroviruses and one of the most common causes of viral myocarditis,” she said.

“And we saw like with other viruses, the diagnosis of Coxsackievirus reduced massively in 2020 when SARS-COV 2 arrived.

She added that the total number of people getting myocarditis after 2020 stayed the same suggesting “SARS-COV 2 filled the niche” that Coxsackievirus had left behind.

“But then the vaccine comes along and from 2021 the incidence rate of myocarditis went sky high,” she added.

“The public health authorities claim that they want to maintain trust and yet they won’t explore these avenues to rule out concerns,” she added.

Relatively Short Time Frame

Dr. Christopher Williams, consultant epidemiologist for Public Health Wales, told The Epoch Times by email that reaction to the infection “remains extremely rare.”

He added that “Enterovirus is a common infection of childhood, causing a range of infections including respiratory disease, hand, foot and mouth, and viral meningitis.”

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“In very young babies, enterovirus can, in rare cases, also cause a severe illness in the first few weeks of life. Most babies and children recover completely following enterovirus infection,” he said.

Williams reiterated that this only “affects the heart on very rare occasions.”

“This cluster is unusual due to the number of cases reported in a relatively short time frame, and so investigations are now ongoing in collaboration with the paediatric team in the children’s hospital of Wales to understand the reasons why and to investigate any further cases that may be reported in the coming weeks and months,” he said.

“Parents should be reassured that although there has been an increase in cases, this is still an extremely rare occurrence,” added Williams.



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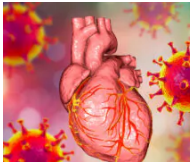
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