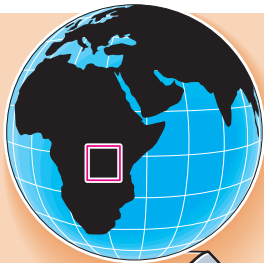


Fears of Typhus epidemic in Rwanda

Doctors are investigating fears that a Typhus epidemic has broken out in Rwanda after the deaths from a mysterious fever of at least 30 people in the past few days. Historically, the highly contagious disease has been a major killer in wartime but is now rare outside of tropical Africa and South America

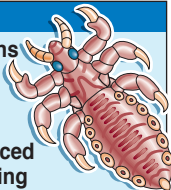


Typhus – symptoms and effects

Severe headache, back and limb pain, coughing and constipation are followed by high fever. Rashes, confusion – in many cases leading to delirium – weak heartbeat, convulsions and loss of consciousness. Death may result from heart or kidney failure, pneumonia or septicaemia

How the disease spreads

In crowded, unsanitary conditions the micro-organism 'Rickettsia' spreads between humans via the infected faeces of body lice. Deposits on the skin are introduced into the bloodstream by scratching



Prevention

Control of human louse infestation through insecticides. Typhus vaccines are also available



Treatment

If caught early Typhus fevers can be treated simply with pills. In its later stages antibiotic injections are needed

Mortality rate

Fatalities in children under 10 are rare. Mortality increases with age and can reach 60 per cent in untreated patients over 50 years of age

**Civilian safety zone:
French troops due to
pull out on August 21**