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Sub-seasonal predictability of climate driving meningitis outbreak over the African meningitis belt

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Abstract Text:

The two well-defined northern Africa seasons (wet and dry) are characterised by the occurrence of devastating tropical diseases such as meningitis, Lassa fever, Rift Valley fever, and malaria. These tropical diseases are associated with specific atmospheric conditions. Meningococcal Meningitis outbreaks are climate sensitive and one of the most endemic diseases observed over the African Meningitis Belt (AMB) with a prevalence period up to 7 months (December-June). Previous studies based on the link between atmospheric conditions and the occurrence of meningitis outbreaks have shown that this disease develops under dry and dusty atmospheric conditions which are difficult to represent in numerical weather and climate models, and their predictability at a sub-seasonal timescale is not well documented. The objective of this study is to further document the predictability of the sub-seasonal drivers of the climate metrics linked to meningitis outbreaks over the African meningitis belt in order to reduce their impacts over this region. Based on ERA5 reanalysis from ECMWF, meningitis cases reported by the World Health Organisation (WHO), and in-situ and remote sensing measurements of dust, the influence of midlatitude trough regimes on meningitis episodes is demonstrated, and a potential avenue of sub-seasonal timescale predictability is proposed.

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Program Selection:

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Oral

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