Influenza Update N° 299

02 October 2017, based on data up to 17 September, 2017

Information in this report is categorized by influenza transmission zones, which are geographical groups of countries, areas or territories with similar influenza transmission patterns. For more information on influenza transmission zones, see: www.who.int/influenza/surveillance_monitoring/updates/EN_GIP_Influenza_transmission_zones.pdf

Summary

- Influenza activity remained at low levels in the temperate zone of the northern hemisphere. High levels of influenza activity continued to be reported in the temperate zone of the southern hemisphere and in some countries of South and South East Asia. In Central America and the Caribbean, low influenza activity was reported in a few countries. Worldwide, influenza A(H3N2) viruses predominated.

- National Influenza Centres (NICs) and other national influenza laboratories from 62 countries, areas or territories reported data to FluNet for the time period from 04 September 2017 to 17 September 2017 (data as of 2017-09-29 02:04:07 UTC). The WHO GISRS laboratories tested more than 56011 specimens during that time period. 5856 were positive for influenza viruses, of which 4839 (82.6%) were typed as influenza A and 1017 (17.4%) as influenza B. Of the sub-typed influenza A viruses, 413 (11.1%) were influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 and 3305 (88.9%) were influenza A(H3N2). Of the characterized B viruses, 181 (65.3%) belonged to the B-Yamagata lineage and 96 (34.7%) to the B-Victoria lineage.
The WHO Consultation and Information Meeting on the Composition of Influenza Virus Vaccines for Use in the 2018 Southern Hemispher Influenza Season was held on 25-28 September 2017 in Melbourne, Australia. It was recommended that trivalent vaccines contain the following: an A/Michigan/45/2015 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus; an A/Singapore/INFIMH-16-0019/2016 (H3N2)-like virus; and a B/Phuket/3073/2013-like virus. It was also recommended that quadrivalent vaccines containing two influenza B viruses contain the above three viruses and a B/Brisbane/60/2008-like virus (http://www.who.int/influenza/vaccines/virus/recommendations/2018_south/en/).

For more detailed information, see the Influenza reports from WHO Regional Offices:

- WHO Region of the Americas (AMRO): www.paho.org/influenzareports
- WHO European Region (EURO): www.flunewseurope.org/
- WHO Western Pacific Region (WPRO): www.wpro.who.int/emerging_diseases/Influenza/en/

Countries in the temperate zone of the southern hemisphere

- In the temperate zone of the Southern Hemisphere, influenza activity appeared to have peaked in Oceania, South America and South Africa.

- In temperate South America, influenza and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) activities continued to trend downwards throughout most of the sub-region. In Chile, influenza activity remained slightly above the seasonal threshold with predominantly influenza B virus detections reported in recent weeks. Overall, severe acute respiratory infection (SARI) and influenza like illness (ILI) indicators decreased.

- In Oceania, seasonal influenza activity continued at elevated levels, with influenza A(H3N2) virus predominant, followed by B viruses. In Australia, ILI and influenza activity was reported to plateau at the national level with subnational variability. Overall, activity was similar to slightly greater compared to past seasons. A sharp increase on influenza-associated pneumonia deaths was observed in the region of New South Wales in the recent weeks. In New Zealand, respiratory illness indicators and influenza activity continued to decrease to below seasonal threshold levels, with influenza A(H3N2) and B Yamagata lineage viruses predominantly detected. Overall, the intensity of the season was low compared to past seasons. In New Caledonia, influenza A(H3N2) detections increased sharply.

- In Southern Africa, influenza activity appeared to be decreasing in South Africa. Although most of the season was dominated by influenza A(H3N2), a change in the proportion of circulating influenza subtype was observed in recent weeks, with influenza B most frequently detected.
Number of specimens positive for influenza by subtype in Temperate South America

![Graph showing influenza activity by subtype in Temperate South America]

Data source: FluNet (www.who.int/flunet). Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS)
Data generated on 02/10/17

Number of specimens positive for influenza by subtype in Oceania, Melanesia and Polynesia

![Graph showing influenza activity by subtype in Oceania, Melanesia and Polynesia]

Data source: FluNet (www.who.int/flunet). Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS)
Data generated on 28/09/17
Number of specimens positive for influenza by subtype in Southern Africa

Countries in the tropical zone

Tropical countries of Central America, the Caribbean and South America

- In the Caribbean and Central American countries, respiratory illness indicators and influenza activity remained low in general but RSV activity increased. Ongoing influenza activity was reported in Costa Rica and Nicaragua.
- In tropical South America, influenza and other respiratory virus activity remained low.

African region

- In Western Africa, influenza detections were reported in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Sierra Leone, with all seasonal influenza subtypes present in the region. Few influenza detections were reported in Middle and Eastern Africa.

Tropical Asia

- In Southern Asia, influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 virus detections continued to be reported in India and Bhutan. However, ILI and SARI indicators appeared to be decreasing in Bhutan. Based on reports, low influenza activity was reported in Bangladesh in recent weeks, with influenza B viruses predominantly detected.
- In South East Asia, high levels of influenza activity were reported, with all seasonal influenza subtypes present in the region. Influenza detections continued to increase also in Lao PDR, with influenza A(H3N2) predominant. ILI and influenza activity remained high in southern China and Thailand, with detection of predominantly influenza A(H3N2) viruses and all seasonal influenza subtypes, respectively. Influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 virus detections appeared to have decreased in Myanmar.
Number of specimens positive for influenza by subtype in Southern Asia

Data source: FluNet (www.who.int/flunet). Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS) Data generated on 28/09/17

Number of specimens positive for influenza by subtype in South East Asia

Data source: FluNet (www.who.int/flunet). Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS) Data generated on 28/09/17
Countries in the temperate zone of the northern hemisphere

North America
- Overall influenza virus activity remained low.

Europe
- In Europe, little to no influenza activity was reported.

Northern Africa
- In Northern Africa, no influenza virus detections were reported.

Western Asia
- In Western Asia, influenza activity continued to increase in Qatar, with influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 and A(H3N2) viruses co-circulating.

Central Asia
- In Central Asia, there were no updated reports on virus detections or respiratory illness indicators.

Eastern Asia
- In East Asia, influenza activity remained low.

Sources of data
The Global Influenza Programme monitors influenza activity worldwide and publishes an update every two weeks. The updates are based on available epidemiological and virological data sources, including FluNet (reported by the WHO Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System) FluID (epidemiological data reported by national focal points) and influenza reports from WHO Regional Offices and Member States. Completeness can vary among updates due to availability and quality of data available at the time when the update is developed.

Epidemiological Influenza updates:
http://www.who.int/influenza/surveillance_monitoring/updates/latest_update_GIP_surveillance
Epidemiological Influenza updates archives 2015:
http://www.who.int/influenza/surveillance_monitoring/updates/GIP_surveillance_2015_archives
Virological surveillance updates:
http://www.who.int/influenza/gisrs_laboratory/updates/summaryreport
Virological surveillance updates archives:
http://www.who.int/influenza/gisrs_laboratory/updates/

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