Virological Surveillance Summary

The total number of specimens and number of positive specimens reported to FluNet by Western Pacific Region countries and areas between week 1 and week 25 of 2021 are presented in table 1 below. Influenza A and B are co-circulating, however, the majority of cases reported from week 27, 2020 to week 25, 2021 have been Influenza B (Figure 1). Caution should be taken when interpreting these data as there are reporting delays.

Table 1: Cumulative data reported to FluNet from Western Pacific Region, week 1, 2021 to week 25, 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country (most recent week of report)</th>
<th>Total number of specimens processed</th>
<th>Total number of influenza positive specimens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia (25)</td>
<td>42214</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia (14)</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China (24)</td>
<td>343907</td>
<td>5264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji (4)</td>
<td>222</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan (24)</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao People's Democratic Republic (25)</td>
<td>1726</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia (23)</td>
<td>1230</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolia (23)</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Caledonia</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
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<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Philippines (16)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Korea</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore (24)</td>
<td>1513</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viet Nam (25)</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: Number of specimens positive for influenza by subtype, Western Pacific Region, week 27, 2020 to week 25, 2021 (Source: WHO FLUNET)
Influenza surveillance summary

Influenza surveillance in the WHO Western Pacific Region is based on outpatient and inpatient indicator based surveillance (IBS) systems, as well as event-based surveillance. Case definitions, population groups included and data formats differ among countries. This influenza surveillance summary includes countries and areas where routine IBS is conducted and information is available.

The WHO surveillance case definition for influenza-like illness (ILI) is an acute respiratory infection with a measured fever of ≥38°C and cough, with symptom onset within the last 10 days. For SARI, it is an acute respiratory infection (ARI) with a history of fever or measured fever of ≥38°C and cough, with symptom onset within 10 days that requires hospitalization. Sentinel site data should be interpreted with caution since the number of sites reporting may vary between weeks.

Countries in the temperate zone of the Northern Hemisphere

In countries within the temperate zone of the Northern Hemisphere, ILI and influenza activity continues to be lower than in previous seasons.

Outpatient ILI Surveillance

China (North)

During week 24 of 2021, the percentage of visits for ILI at national sentinel hospitals in Northern China was 2.9%, lower than the previous week (3.2%) and higher during the same period in 2018-2020 (2.4%, 2.3% and 2.2%, respectively) (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Percentage of visits for ILI at sentinel hospitals in Northern China, 2018-2021
(Source: China National Influenza Center)
**Mongolia**

During week 23 of 2021, ILI activity in Mongolia remained at six ILI cases per 10,000 population as recorded in the previous report. This is slightly higher than the lower tolerance limit of four ILI cases per 10,000 population. (Figure 3).

![Figure 3: Proportion of outpatient ILI visits per 10,000 people in Mongolia, 2019-2021](Source: Mongolia National Influenza Center)

**Republic of Korea**

In week 25 of 2021, the overall weekly ILI rate was 1.2 ILI cases per 1,000 outpatient visits, which was lower than the previous week (1.3 ILI cases per 1,000 outpatient visits). The ILI consultation rate has remained below the national epidemic threshold (5.8 ILI cases per 1,000 outpatient visits) since week 10 of 2020 (Figure 4).

![Figure 4: Weekly ILI incidence rate per 1,000 outpatient consultations, Republic of Korea, 2017-2021](Source: Korean Centres for Disease Control and Prevention)
Sentinel influenza surveillance

Japan

In week 23 of 2021, the number of cases reported weekly by sentinel hospital sites remained very low in Japan. The number of cases this year has not been in line with usual trends in which seasonal peaks are seen between weeks 1-9, the trend in 2021 has been consistently low with no peak (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Number of influenza cases reported weekly per reporting sentinel hospital site, Japan 2011-2021
(Source: Japan National Institute of Infectious Diseases)
Countries/areas in the tropical zone

ILI and influenza activity continued to be lower than previous seasons in most of the countries and areas in the tropical zone.

Hong Kong SAR (China) – ILI and hospital Surveillance

In week 25 of 2021, the average consultation rate for ILI among sentinel general outpatient clinics was 0.7 ILI cases per 1,000 consultations, which was higher than the 0.6 ILI cases per 1,000 consultations recorded in the previous week and the same rate of consultation during the same period in 2020 (Figure 6). The average consultation rate for ILI among sentinel private medical practitioners was 8.6 ILI cases per 1,000 consultations, which was higher than 6.9 recorded in the previous week (Figure 7).

China (South) - ILI Surveillance

During Week 24 of 2021, the percentage of visits for ILI at national sentinel hospitals in Southern China was 4.2%, lower than the previous week (4.3%), higher than the same week of 2018 and 2020 (4.0% and 3.1%, respectively) and the same as the period of 2019 (4.2%) (Figure 8).
Singapore – Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI) Surveillance
In Week 24 of 2021, the average daily number of patients seeking treatment in polyclinics for ARI was 720 over 5.5 working days, higher than the previous season in 2020 (Figure 9). Of 133 samples tested for influenza in the past 4 weeks, the positivity rate in the community was 0.0%; there were no positive results in May 2021.

Figure 9: Average daily polyclinic attendances for ARI in Singapore, 2020-2021
(Source: Singapore Ministry of Health)

Lao PDR (no update)
From 8 to 14 May 2021, the proportion of ILI cases presenting to sentinel sites is less than the previous week. Over the past two months, ILI presentations have fluctuated compared to the 3-year average (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Weekly proportion of ILI presentations at sentinel sites for 2021 compared to previous 3-year average (2018 to 2020)
(Source: Lao National Center for Laboratory and Epidemiology)
Cambodia

In week 24 of 2021, the percentage of ILI cases was 1.1% among all consultations. This was similar to the previous week (1%) and lower than the same week in 2020 (3.2%) (Figure 11). In week 24, 2021, there were no positive specimens for influenza A or B and the positivity rate; there has only been one Influenza A case detected for 2021 in week 8 (Figure 12).

Figure 11: Number of ILI cases from seven sentinel sites and influenza positivity rate by week, 2020-2021, Cambodia
(Source: Communicable Disease Control Department, Cambodia Ministry of Health)

Figure 12: Number of influenza positive samples by subtype, 2020-2021, Cambodia
(Source: Communicable Disease Control Department, Cambodia Ministry of Health)
Countries in the temperate zone of the southern hemisphere

In the temperate zone of the southern hemisphere, influenza activity is reported during the influenza season usually starting in May in Australia and New Zealand.

**Australia – Laboratory-confirmed influenza and ILI**

From 7 June to 20 June 2021, there were 27 laboratory-confirmed influenza notification to the National Notifiable Disease Surveillance System (NNDSS). In the year to date, there have been 358 notifications of laboratory-confirmed influenza to the NNDSS. Number of confirmed cases reported have remained low since April 2020 and are lower than the five-year average but showing a weekly trend similar to that seen in past years *(Figure 13).*

![Figure 13: ILI presentations to sentinel general practitioners by month and week from 2016-2021 in Australia](Source: National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System, Australian Department of Health)

**New Zealand – Influenza like Illness**

Public Health Units routinely investigate respiratory outbreaks, including laboratory testing of a sample of cases. In the week ending on 18 June 2021, there were two ILI outbreaks reported at aged residential centres in Palmerston North (16 cases) and Dunedin (20 cases). There was an additional ARI outbreak in an aged residential centre in Wellington, resulting in 41 cases. Overall, ILI consultation rates reported by HealthStat sentinel surveillance sites have been lower than the weekly rates seen at this time in 2020, and are following a similar trend to the historical rates *(Figure 14).*

![Figure 14: ARI reports per 100K](Week ending)
**Pacific Island Countries and Areas (PICs) - ILI Surveillance**

In the Pacific Island Countries and Areas, in week 24 of 2021, ILI cases overall remained low. However, ILI cases increased in the Northern Mariana Islands, Wallis & Futuna, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and Solomon Islands. There was a decrease in ILI cases reported in Vanuatu, Fiki, Kiribati, New Caledonia and Palau. There were no changes to the number of ILI cases in the Cook Islands for the week. No ILI cases were available from French Polynesia, Samoa and Tonga for the week. American Samoa, Guam and Nauru have not participated in the surveillance (Figure 15).

* Caution should be taken in interpreting these data as there may be changes in the number of sentinel sites reporting to the Pacific Syndromic Surveillance System.

**Figure 15: Reported cases of influenza-like illness in Pacific Island Countries, 14 June to 20 June 2021**
(Source: Pacific Syndromic Surveillance System Weekly Bulletin)
Global influenza situation updates

Virological update

Global update

Others:

- Recommended composition of influenza virus vaccines for use in the 2021 southern hemisphere influenza season Link
- Recommended composition of influenza virus vaccines for use in the 2020-2021 northern hemisphere influenza season Link

WHO's YouTube Channel: film exploring a number of key aspects of the constant evolution of influenza viruses and associated impacts on public health. Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish