Influenza Update N° 331

24 December 2018, based on data up to 09 December 2018

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

- In the temperate zone of the northern hemisphere influenza activity continued to increase, although overall influenza activity remained low. Increased influenza detections were reported in some countries of Southern and South-East Asia. In the temperate zones of the southern hemisphere, influenza activity returned to inter-seasonal levels. Worldwide, seasonal influenza A viruses accounted for the majority of detections.

- National Influenza Centres (NICs) and other national influenza laboratories from 115 countries, areas or territories reported data to FluNet for the time period from 26 November 2018 to 09 December 2018 (data as of 2018-12-20 14:17:33 UTC). The WHO GISRS laboratories tested more than 139511 specimens during that time period. 10520 were positive for influenza viruses, of which 9970 (94.8%) were typed as influenza A and 550 (5.2%) as influenza B. Of the sub-typed influenza A viruses, 4961 (84.1%) were influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 and 936 (15.9%) were influenza A(H3N2). Of the characterized B viruses, 85 (63%) belonged to the B-Yamagata lineage and 50 (37%) to the B-Victoria lineage.
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 northern hemisphere

- In the temperate zone of the northern hemisphere, influenza activity increased in some of the countries.

- In North America, influenza activity increased overall, with influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 virus predominating. In Canada, influenza activity continued to increase; pediatric hospitalizations were high for this time of the year and were mainly due to influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 virus. In the United States of America, influenza activity remained low although a slight increase was reported, with detections of mainly influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 virus. Influenza like illness (ILI) activity was reported at or above region-specific baseline in some of the reporting regions. Increased detections of influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 virus were reported in Mexico.

- In Europe, influenza activity started to increase in some countries but remained low in general, with detection of predominantly influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 and A(H3N2) viruses. In Central Asia, increased levels of severe acute respiratory infections (SARI) and detections of influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 were reported in Kyrgyzstan.

- In Northern Africa, there was no influenza activity detected across reporting countries.

- In Western Asia, respiratory illness indicators increased in some of the countries, although influenza activity remained low, with the exception of Georgia where detections of influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 increased. Elevated influenza activity continued to be reported across countries of the Arabian Peninsula. Detections of influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 virus remained elevated in Bahrain; influenza percent positivity continued to increase in Saudi Arabia and appeared to decrease in Qatar, with influenza A (H1N1)pdm09 virus predominating.

- In East Asia, a slight increase of ILI levels and influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 detections were reported in China. ILI levels were reported above the seasonal threshold in the Republic of Korea, with increased detections of influenza A viruses (both subtypes).
Number of specimens positive for influenza by subtype in North America

Data source: FluNet (www.who.int/flunet). Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS)
Data generated on 19/12/2018

Number of specimens positive for influenza by subtype in the European Region of WHO

Data source: FluNet (www.who.int/flunet). Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS)
Data generated on 19/12/2018
Countries in the tropical zone

Tropical countries of Central America, the Caribbean and South America

- In the Caribbean, while influenza activity remained low in general, increased detections of influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 virus were reported in Puerto Rico. In Haiti, SARI levels continued to increase with most of the cases in children under five years of age. Increased respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) activity was reported across the sub-region. In Central American countries, influenza activity declined in Costa Rica and El Salvador while increased detections of influenza B followed by influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 viruses were reported in Nicaragua. Although decreased, RSV activity remained elevated across the sub-region.
- In the tropical countries of South America, influenza and RSV activity were low in general except for Ecuador reporting increased RSV activity.

African region

- In Western Africa, influenza detections were reported as decreased across reporting countries, except for Burkina Faso with increased influenza A(H3N2) virus detections. In Middle Africa, increased ILI activity was reported in Cameroon with decreased detections of influenza A(H3N2) followed by a smaller number of influenza B viruses (both lineages). In Eastern Africa, decreased detections of influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 and A(H3N2) viruses were reported in Mauritius and influenza B virus detection continued to be reported in Mozambique.

Tropical Asia

- In Southern Asia, decreased influenza activity of predominately A(H1N1)pdm09 virus was reported in India. Influenza activity continued to increase in Iran (Islamic Republic of) with influenza A(H3N2) viruses most frequently detected. ILI and SARI levels appeared to increase in Afghanistan with increased detections of influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 virus.
- In South East Asia, influenza activity continued to be reported with all seasonal influenza subtypes detected across the region. Influenza activity increased in the Philippines [influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 and B Victoria-lineage viruses] and in Singapore (both seasonal influenza A subtypes and B Victoria-lineage viruses) in recent weeks. In Lao PDR, influenza percent positivity remained elevated with influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 virus most frequently detected. Although decreased, influenza virus detections continued to be reported in Cambodia and Thailand with influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 viruses predominating. Low detections of influenza A(H3N2) were reported in Viet Nam.
Number of specimens positive for influenza by subtype in Central America and Caribbean

![Graph](image1)

**Data source:** FluNet ([www.who.int/flunet](http://www.who.int/flunet)). Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS)
Data generated on 19/12/2018

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

![Graph](image2)

**Data source:** FluNet ([www.who.int/flunet](http://www.who.int/flunet)). Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS)
Data generated on 19/12/2018

**Countries in the temperate zone of the southern hemisphere**

- In the temperate zone of the southern hemisphere, influenza activity returned to inter-seasonal levels. However, increased detections of influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 virus were reported in Australia with activity localized in the Queensland and South Australia regions.
Number of specimens positive for influenza by subtype in southern hemisphere

Data source: FluNet (www.who.int/flunet). Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS)
Data generated on 19/12/2018

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.

Seasonal influenza reviews:
A review of the 2017–2018 influenza season in the northern hemisphere, was published on 24 August 2018 and can be found here:
http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/274263/WER9334.pdf?ua=1&ua=1
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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