Influenza Update N° 348

19 August 2019, based on data up to 04 August 2019

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 zones of the southern hemisphere, influenza activity appeared to have peaked in most countries.

▪ In the Caribbean, Central American, and tropical South American countries, influenza activity was low overall.

▪ In tropical Africa, influenza activity was low across reporting countries, with the exception of a few countries in Eastern Africa.

▪ In Southern Asia, influenza activity was low across reporting countries.

▪ In South East Asia, influenza activity was decreasing or low across reporting countries except in Myanmar.

▪ In the temperate zone of the northern hemisphere, influenza activity remained at inter-seasonal levels.

▪ Worldwide, seasonal influenza A viruses accounted for the majority of detections.
National Influenza Centres (NICs) and other national influenza laboratories from 95 countries, areas or territories reported data to FluNet for the time period from 22 July 2019 to 04 August 2019 (data as of 2019-08-16 03:18:28 UTC). The WHO GISRS laboratories tested more than 42723 specimens during that time period. 3660 were positive for influenza viruses, of which 2340 (63.9%) were typed as influenza A and 1320 (36.1%) as influenza B. Of the sub-typed influenza A viruses, 661 (38.9%) were influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 and 1038 (61.1%) were influenza A(H3N2). Of the characterized B viruses, 59 (7.9%) belonged to the B-Yamagata lineage and 687 (92.1%) 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](http://www.paho.org/influenzareports)
- WHO European Region (EURO): [www.flunewseurope.org](http://www.flunewseurope.org)
- WHO Western Pacific Region (WPRO): [www.wpro.who.int/emerging_diseases/Influenza/en/](http://www.wpro.who.int/emerging_diseases/Influenza/en/)

Countries in the temperate zone of the southern hemisphere

- In Oceania, influenza activity continued to decrease across the transmission zone, with influenza A(H3N2) predominant among the subtyped influenza A viruses. In Australia, at the national level, influenza-like illness (ILI) and weekly laboratory-confirmed notifications of influenza remained high. There was some geographical variability in influenza notifications and ILI activity trends, with increases reported in some states and decreases reported in others. Influenza A(H3N2) viruses were most frequently detected, followed by influenza B viruses. Throughout the regions, influenza activity started earlier than previous seasons, and appeared to have already peaked in Southern Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania. In Queensland, activity had not peaked yet. Western Australia reported ILI activity higher than that of the 2017 season. Influenza and ILI activity continued to decrease in New Zealand; however, influenza positivity rates remained elevated, with detections of influenza A(H3N2) and influenza B/Victoria lineage viruses. Indicators of severity of infection in Australia (hospitalization rates, direct admission to Intensive Care Unit [ICU]) and New Zealand (hospital stays, direct ICU admissions) were low. No alerts of unusual influenza activity were reported among the other countries in the transmission zone.

- In South Africa, influenza activity continued to decrease this period and influenza A(H3N2) viruses remained predominant.

- In temperate South America, influenza activity appeared to decrease across the transmission zone, with all seasonal influenza subtypes co-circulating. A slight increase of influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 virus detections was reported in Uruguay.
Number of specimens positive for influenza by subtype in Oceania

Data source: FluNet (www.who.int/flunet). Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS)
Data generated on 15/08/2019

Number of specimens positive for influenza by subtype in Southern Africa

Data source: FluNet (www.who.int/flunet). Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS)
Data generated on 15/08/2019
Countries in the tropical zone

**Tropical countries of Central America, the Caribbean and South America**

- In the Caribbean and Central American countries, influenza activity remained low overall. Cuba reported decreased influenza virus detections, with all seasonal influenza subtypes co-circulating. Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) activity decreased in El Salvador.
- In the tropical countries of South America, influenza activity was low in general among those countries reporting data for this period. RSV activity was high in Peru.

**Tropical Africa**

- In Western Africa, influenza detections were low across reporting countries. Decreased influenza A(H3N2) virus detections in comparison with previous weeks were reported in Côte d’Ivoire and Guinea.
- In Middle Africa, influenza activity was low across reporting countries, with Cameroon reporting a few detections of B viruses.
- In Eastern Africa, influenza detections continued to be reported across reporting countries. Influenza activity continued to increase in Madagascar with B viruses predominating.
Tropical Asia

- In Southern Asia, influenza detections remained low across reporting countries.
- In South East Asia, influenza activity decreased from previous weeks or was low in most reporting countries, with exception of Myanmar where influenza detections remained high with influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 viruses predominating. Influenza activity appeared to decrease in Thailand, with influenza A(H3N2) and B/Victoria-lineage viruses co-circulating.

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

Data source: FluNet (www.who.int/flunet). Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS) Data generated on 15/08/2019
Countries in the temperate zone of the northern hemisphere

- In the temperate zone of the northern hemisphere, influenza activity remained at inter-seasonal levels in most countries.

Number of specimens positive for influenza by subtype in the northern hemisphere

Data source: FluNet (www.who.int/flunet). Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS) Data generated on 15/08/2019

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 in 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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