Influenza Update N° 349

02 September 2019, based on data up to 18 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 continued to decrease 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 Western and Eastern Africa.
- In Southern Asia, influenza activity was low across reporting countries except in Bhutan where influenza percent positivity was reported above alert threshold.
- In South East Asia, influenza activity was low in most reporting countries and remained elevated 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 96 countries, areas or territories reported data to FluNet for the time period from 05 August 2019 to 18 August 2019 (data as of 2019-08-30 04:12:36 UTC). The WHO GISRS laboratories tested more than 37252 specimens during that time period. 2823 were positive for influenza viruses, of which 1698 (60.1%) were typed as influenza A and 1125 (39.9%) as influenza B. Of the sub-typed influenza A viruses, 461 (31.3%) were influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 and 1014 (68.7%) were influenza A(H3N2). Of the characterized B viruses, 51 (8.4%) belonged to the B-Yamagata lineage and 555 (91.6%) 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 decreased across the transmission zone, with detection of predominately influenza A(H3N2) followed by influenza B viruses. In Australia, despite some geographical variability across regions, at the national level influenza-like illness (ILI) and weekly laboratory-confirmed notifications of influenza were lower than average for this time of the year. Influenza A(H3N2) and B viruses co-circulated. Throughout the country, influenza activity started earlier than previous seasons, and appeared to have peaked in all regions. In Western Australia, ILI activity returned to expected levels for this time of the year. ILI and influenza activity were below seasonal baseline threshold in New Zealand. In New Caledonia influenza activity increased slightly, with influenza A(H3N2) and influenza B/Victoria lineage viruses detected in equal proportion. Increased influenza B detections were reported in French Polynesia.
- In South Africa, influenza activity was low and influenza A(H3N2) remained the most frequently detected viruses.
- In temperate South America, influenza activity was reported as decreased in most countries with exception of Chile, where influenza activity appeared to increase in comparison to previous weeks with influenza B viruses predominantly detected.
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 29/08/2019

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 29/08/2019
Number of specimens positive for influenza by subtype in temperate South America

![Graph showing number of specimens positive for influenza by subtype in temperate South America.]

**Data source:** FluNet (www.who.int/flunet). Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS)  
Data generated on 29/08/2019

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### 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. Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) activity increased in Cuba and Costa Rica.
- In the tropical countries of South America, influenza activity was low in general among those countries reporting data for this period. RSV activity remained elevated in Colombia and Peru.

**Tropical Africa**

- In Western Africa, influenza detections were low across reporting countries. Influenza A(H3N2) virus detections were low in Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea and Senegal. Increased detections of influenza B viruses were reported in Togo.
- In Middle Africa, influenza activity was low across reporting countries.
- In Eastern Africa, influenza detections continued to be reported across reporting countries. Influenza activity continued to increase in Madagascar with influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 and B viruses co-circulating, though ILI activity appeared to decrease.
Tropical Asia

- In Southern Asia, influenza detections remained low across reporting countries, except in Bhutan where ILI and influenza activity increased in recent weeks. Influenza percent positivity was reported above alert threshold with co-circulation of influenza A(H3N2) and B/Victoria lineage viruses.

- In South East Asia, influenza activity was low in most reporting countries, with exception of Myanmar where influenza detections remained high with influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 viruses predominating. Although decreased, influenza activity continued to be reported 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 29/08/2019*
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

![Graph showing 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 29/08/2019

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 2018–2019 influenza season in the northern hemisphere, was published in August 2019 and can be found here: https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/326242/WER9432-en-fr.pdf

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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