Influenza Update N° 351

30 September 2019, based on data up to 15 September 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 was low in most countries, except Chile where a second wave of influenza activity of predominately B viruses was reported.
- In the Caribbean, and tropical South American countries, influenza activity was low overall. In Central American countries, influenza activity continued to increase in El Salvador.
- In tropical Africa, influenza activity was low across reporting countries.
- In Southern Asia, influenza activity was low across reporting countries except in Bhutan where influenza activity continued to be reported above alert threshold.
- In South East Asia, influenza activity was low in most reporting countries and continued to be reported at moderate level in Malaysia and Myanmar.
- In the temperate zone of the northern hemisphere, influenza activity remained at inter-seasonal levels overall.
- Worldwide, seasonal influenza A viruses accounted for the majority of detections.
National Influenza Centres (NICs) and other national influenza laboratories from 80 countries, areas or territories reported data to FluNet for the time period from 02 September 2019 to 15 September 2019 (data as of 2019-09-27 04:26:41 UTC). The WHO GISRS laboratories tested more than 36387 specimens during that time period. 2704 were positive for influenza viruses, of which 1650 (61%) were typed as influenza A and 1054 (39%) as influenza B. Of the sub-typed influenza A viruses, 405 (31.7%) were influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 and 874 (68.3%) were influenza A(H3N2). Of the characterized B viruses, 63 (17.7%) belonged to the B-Yamagata lineage and 292 (82.3%) to the B-Victoria lineage.

The WHO Consultation and Information Meeting on the Composition of Influenza Virus Vaccines for Use in the 2020 Southern Hemisphere Influenza Season was held on 23-26 September 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland. It was recommended that trivalent vaccines contain the following: an A/Brisbane/02/2018 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus; an A/South Australia/34/2019 (H3N2)-like virus; and a B/Washington/02/2019-like (B/Victoria lineage) virus. It was also recommended that quadrivalent vaccines containing two influenza B viruses contain the above three viruses and a B/Phuket/3073/2013-like (B/Yamagata lineage) virus. For more information: https://www.who.int/influenza/vaccines/virus/recommendations/2020_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 Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMRO): http://www.emro.who.int/health-topics/influenza/situation-update.html
- 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 Oceania, influenza activity decreased across the transmission zone. 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, decreased from a peak in activity in July. The proportion of influenza B viruses among influenza positive samples continued to slightly increase this period. ILI and influenza activity were below their seasonal baseline thresholds in New Zealand. An increase in ILI consultations was observed in Wallis.
- In South Africa, influenza and ILI activity returned below seasonal threshold.
- In temperate South America, influenza activity decreased in most countries with exception of Chile, where a second wave of influenza activity of predominately B viruses was reported.
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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 27/09/2019

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 27/09/2019
Countries in the tropical zone

Tropical countries of Central America, the Caribbean and South America

- In the Caribbean countries, influenza activity remained low overall. In Central American countries, influenza activity continued to increase in El Salvador, with influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 predominately detected. Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) activity continued to increase in Panama.
- In the tropical countries of South America, influenza activity was low in general among those countries reporting data for this period. RSV activity continued to decrease in Peru.

Tropical Africa

- In Western Africa, influenza detections were low across reporting countries. Increased detections of predominately influenza B/Victoria lineage viruses were reported in Guinea. ILI activity continued to increase in Senegal.
- In Middle Africa, low detections of influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 and B/Victoria lineage viruses were reported in Central African Republic.
- In Eastern Africa, influenza detections were low across reporting countries. Influenza activity continued to be reported in Madagascar with detections of predominately influenza B followed by A(H1N1)pdm09 viruses.
Tropical Asia

- In Southern Asia, influenza detections were low across reporting countries, with a few exceptions. In Bhutan, influenza percent positivity remained above alert threshold. Influenza-associated ILI were higher compared to the last two seasons and were most frequently reported in persons aged 5-14 years. Influenza A(H3N2) and B/Victoria lineage viruses co-circulated. Increased influenza activity was reported in Nepal in recent weeks, with detection of similar proportions of A(H3N2) and B/Victoria lineage viruses.

- In South East Asia, influenza activity was low in most reporting countries. Detections of predominantly influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 and B viruses continued to be reported at moderate level in Malaysia and Myanmar. In Thailand, all seasonal influenza subtypes co-circulated.

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

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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. In Qatar, influenza activity started to increase with A(H3N2) viruses predominating.

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

![Graph showing number of specimens positive for influenza by subtype]

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

Data generated on 27/09/2019

**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](https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/326242/WER9432-en-fr.pdf)

Epidemiological Influenza updates:

Epidemiological Influenza updates archives 2015:

Virological surveillance updates:
[http://www.who.int/influenza/gisrs_laboratory/updates/summaryreport](http://www.who.int/influenza/gisrs_laboratory/updates/summaryreport)

Virological surveillance updates archives:
[http://www.who.int/influenza/gisrs_laboratory/updates/](http://www.who.int/influenza/gisrs_laboratory/updates/)

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