Influenza Update N° 356

9 December 2019, based on data up to 24 November 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 zone of the northern hemisphere, respiratory illness indicators and influenza activity started to increase in most countries. Influenza activity was elevated across the countries in Western Asia.
- In the Caribbean and Central American countries, influenza activity was low overall, except for Jamaica and Honduras. In tropical South American countries, influenza activity remained low.
- In tropical Africa, influenza activity remained elevated in some countries of Western Africa.
- In Southern Asia, influenza activity was low across reporting countries, but continued to increase in Iran (Islamic Republic of).
- In South East Asia, influenza activity continued to be reported in Lao PDR and Viet Nam.
- In the temperate zones of the southern hemisphere, influenza activity returned to inter-seasonal levels.
- Worldwide, seasonal influenza A(H3N2) viruses accounted for the majority of detections.
National Influenza Centres (NICs) and other national influenza laboratories from 119 countries, areas or territories reported data to FluNet for the time period from 11 November 2019 to 24 November 2019 (data as of 2019-12-06 09:04:10 UTC). The WHO GISRS laboratories tested more than 92883 specimens during that time period. 7914 were positive for influenza viruses, of which 5629 (71.1%) were typed as influenza A and 2285 (28.9%) as influenza B. Of the sub-typed influenza A viruses, 2682 (71.5%) were influenza A(H3N2) and 1069 (28.5%) were influenza A(H1N1)pdm09. Of the characterized B viruses, 1014 (96.8%) belonged to the B-Victoria lineage and 34 (3.2%) to the B-Yamagata 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 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 northern hemisphere

- In the temperate zone of the northern hemisphere, respiratory illness indicators and influenza activity started to increase in most countries.
- In the countries of North America, ILI and influenza activity crossed the seasonal baseline, with co-circulation of all seasonal influenza subtypes.
- In Europe, influenza activity continued to increase, with influenza A viruses predominant in most countries, and B viruses in several countries of the eastern part of the region.
- In Central Asia, some marginal increases in respiratory illness indicators were reported in most countries.
- In Northern Africa, activity remained at inter-seasonal levels, except for Morocco where low detections of influenza B/Victoria lineage viruses were reported in recent weeks.
- In Western Asia, influenza activity continued to increase overall. In Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, influenza activity continued to increase with detections of predominately influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 and a small proportion of B viruses. Kuwait and Oman continued to report influenza detections at lower levels compared to previous weeks. In Qatar, influenza A(H3N2) viruses were most frequently detected. Increased SARI levels continued to be reported in Saudi Arabia.
- In East Asia, ILI and influenza activity increased slightly in most countries, but remained low overall. ILI activity was reported above the seasonal threshold in the Republic of Korea, with detections of predominately influenza A(H1N1)pdm09.
Number of specimens positive for influenza by subtype in the northern hemisphere

![Graph showing influenza specimens by subtype in the northern hemisphere]

**Data source:** FluNet (www.who.int/flunet). Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS)  
Data generated on 06/12/2019

Number of specimens positive for influenza by subtype in Western Asia

![Graph showing influenza specimens by subtype in Western Asia]

**Data source:** FluNet (www.who.int/flunet). Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS)  
Data generated on 06/12/2019
Countries in the tropical zone

Tropical countries of Central America, the Caribbean and South America

- In the Caribbean countries, influenza activity remained low overall; detections of influenza A(H3N2) and B/Victoria lineage viruses decreased in Cuba. Influenza activity of predominantly influenza A(H3N2) viruses continued to be reported in Jamaica at low levels. In Central American countries, influenza activity continued to decrease in El Salvador and Nicaragua. Honduras continued to report influenza activity of predominantly A(H3N2) and B viruses.
- In the tropical countries of South America, influenza activity was low in general.

Tropical Africa

- In Western Africa, influenza activity was elevated in some reporting countries. Increased influenza virus detections with predominantly influenza A(H3N2) and B/Victoria lineage viruses continued to be reported in Ghana, and Guinea and decreased detections were reported in Mali. Togo continued to report ILI and SARI activity with influenza A(H3N2) and B virus detections at lower levels compared to the previous reporting period. Updated reports indicated that Influenza A and B viruses co-circulated in Nigeria during the previous month.
- In Middle Africa, Cameroon reported increased influenza activity with detections of all seasonal influenza subtypes. South Sudan reported low detections of influenza B/Victoria lineage viruses.
- In Eastern Africa, influenza detections were low across most reporting countries. Increased SARI activity and influenza A and B detections were reported in Kenya. Increased ILI activity was reported in Zambia with no detections of influenza viruses.

Tropical Asia

- In Southern Asia, influenza detections were low across reporting countries except for Iran (Islamic Republic of) where influenza activity continued to increase with detections of predominantly influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 viruses.
- In South East Asia, influenza activity was reported in some countries. In recent weeks, influenza activity was elevated in Lao PDR and Viet Nam, with detections of predominantly influenza A(H3N2) and influenza B/Victoria-lineage in the former and influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 and influenza B viruses in the latter. In the Philippines, influenza activity returned to low levels after increased levels of predominantly influenza A(H3N2) virus activity in previous weeks.
Number of specimens positive for influenza by subtype in Western Africa

![Graph showing number of specimens positive for influenza by subtype in Western Africa.](image)

**Data source:** FluNet ([www.who.int/flunet](http://www.who.int/flunet)). Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS)
Data generated on 06/12/2019

Number of specimens positive for influenza by subtype in temperate Southern Asia

![Graph showing number of specimens positive for influenza by subtype in temperate Southern Asia.](image)

**Data source:** FluNet ([www.who.int/flunet](http://www.who.int/flunet)). Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS)
Data generated on 06/12/2019
Countries in the temperate zone of the southern hemisphere

- In the temperate zones of the southern hemisphere, influenza activity returned to inter-seasonal levels.

Number of specimens positive for influenza by subtype in southern hemisphere

![Graph showing 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 06/12/2019

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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