

2nd WHO Global e-Consultation on the Integrated Sentinel Surveillance of Influenza and SARS-CoV-2 and the Development of GISRS Plus

Virtual

12 – 14 October 2021

Background

The first WHO consultation from 6 – 8 October 2020 developed [interim guidance](#) of epidemiological and laboratory surveillance of influenza and SARS-CoV-2 using the Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS) and associated systems. Since the implementation of the interim guidance, including [expediting GISRS genomic surveillance](#) component as part of global efforts, enormous experience has been gained at national, regional and global levels. Meanwhile, the approach of integrated surveillance of influenza and SARS-CoV-2 to address critical public health needs of both influenza and SARS-CoV-2 at the same time using existing systems has been welcome by countries and supported by international agencies.

A year and a half into the COVID-19 pandemic, countries and the world have started building longer-term health emergency preparedness. The low seasonal influenza activity and frequent detections of zoonotic influenza infections are an ominous sign of an impending threat of influenza. It is critical to have a follow up global consultation one year after the 1st consultation to review and address immediate needs and discuss strategy of mid-/long- term development of GISRS.

Scope and objectives

The overall aim is to update the interim practical guidance of integrated surveillance of influenza and SARS-CoV-2, and chart a roadmap for the development of GISRS towards GISRS + for influenza and other respiratory viruses including SARS-CoV-2, RSV and other future respiratory viruses of pandemic and epidemic potential. Specific objectives include to:

- take stock of experience and lessons learnt from countries in using influenza sentinel systems in sampling, testing, sequencing, reporting SARS-CoV-2 surveillance data and sharing of SARS-CoV-2 genetic sequence data;
- review and update the interim guidance on integrating influenza and SARS-CoV-2 surveillance;

- assess and update existing surveillance tools for influenza as learnt from COVID-19 pandemic so far, and potentially for SARS-CoV-2;
- review and enhance readiness of GISRS pandemic response; and
- develop a roadmap for GISRS development towards GISRS+.

Expected outcomes

- Updated practical guidance on integrated surveillance of influenza and SARS-CoV-2
- Compendium of country best practices for integrating influenza and SARS-CoV-2 sentinel surveillance
- GISRS Pandemic Response Plan
- GISRS Plus roadmap

Agenda outline

- Review recent evidence on SARI, ILI and ARI case definition performance for SARS-CoV-2 surveillance
- Best practices of integrated surveillance from countries
- Review interim standards and identify gaps for SARS-CoV-2 epidemiologic, laboratory and genomic sentinel surveillance
- Review PISA and GISRS pandemic response plan; and
- Review GISRS Plus strategy and roadmap

Participants

- National laboratory and epidemiology national focal points for influenza
- WHO Collaborating Centers and other laboratories of GISRS
- International experts in surveillance of influenza, SARS-CoV-2 and other respiratory viruses
- Global and regional partners and other interested bodies