



World Health Organization

Global Respiratory Virus Activity Weekly update for week 20, ending 17 May 2026 Update No. 579

GLOBAL INFLUENZA SURVEILLANCE AND RESPONSE SYSTEM (GISRS)

[Co-circulation](#)

[Influenza](#)

[SARS-CoV-2](#)

[RSV](#)

[Severity assessment](#)

SUMMARY

In week 20 2026, influenza positivity remained below 10% and SARS-CoV-2 activity remained low globally and in the northern hemisphere temperate and subtropical areas, tropical areas and around 10% in the southern hemisphere temperate and subtropical areas. [Figures 1a, 1b, 1c and 1d] RSV positivity also remained stable and low globally.

❖ Influenza

Globally, influenza detections remained low in week 20 and influenza B viruses were predominant among influenza detections. [Figure 2]

In the southern hemisphere, influenza percent positivity was elevated (>10%) in some countries in Temperate South America and Eastern Africa and in single countries in Tropical South America, Southern Africa and South-East Asia. A small increase in activity was observed in a single country in Temperate South America. [Figures 3 and 4]

In the northern hemisphere, influenza percent positivity was elevated (>10%) in some countries in Central America and the Caribbean, Western and Eastern Africa and Southern Asia and in a single country in Eastern Asia. Small increases in activity were observed in two countries in Central America and the Caribbean and Southern Asia and in single countries in Western Africa and South-East Asia. [Figures 3 and 4]

In the zones with elevated positivity, influenza A(H3N2) was predominant in Central America and the Caribbean, Tropical and Temperate South America, Southern Africa and Southern Asia. Influenza B was predominant in Western Africa and Eastern Asia. Influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 and A(H3N2) were codominant in Eastern Africa and influenza A and B were codominant in South-East Asia. [Figures 5 and 6]

❖ SARS-CoV-2

Globally, SARS-CoV-2 positivity remained stable and low across reporting countries, with elevated positivity (>10%) reported in single countries in Western, Southern and South-East Asia. Small increases in activity were observed in single countries in Tropical South America, Eastern Africa and Southern Asia. [Figures 7 and 8]

❖ Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

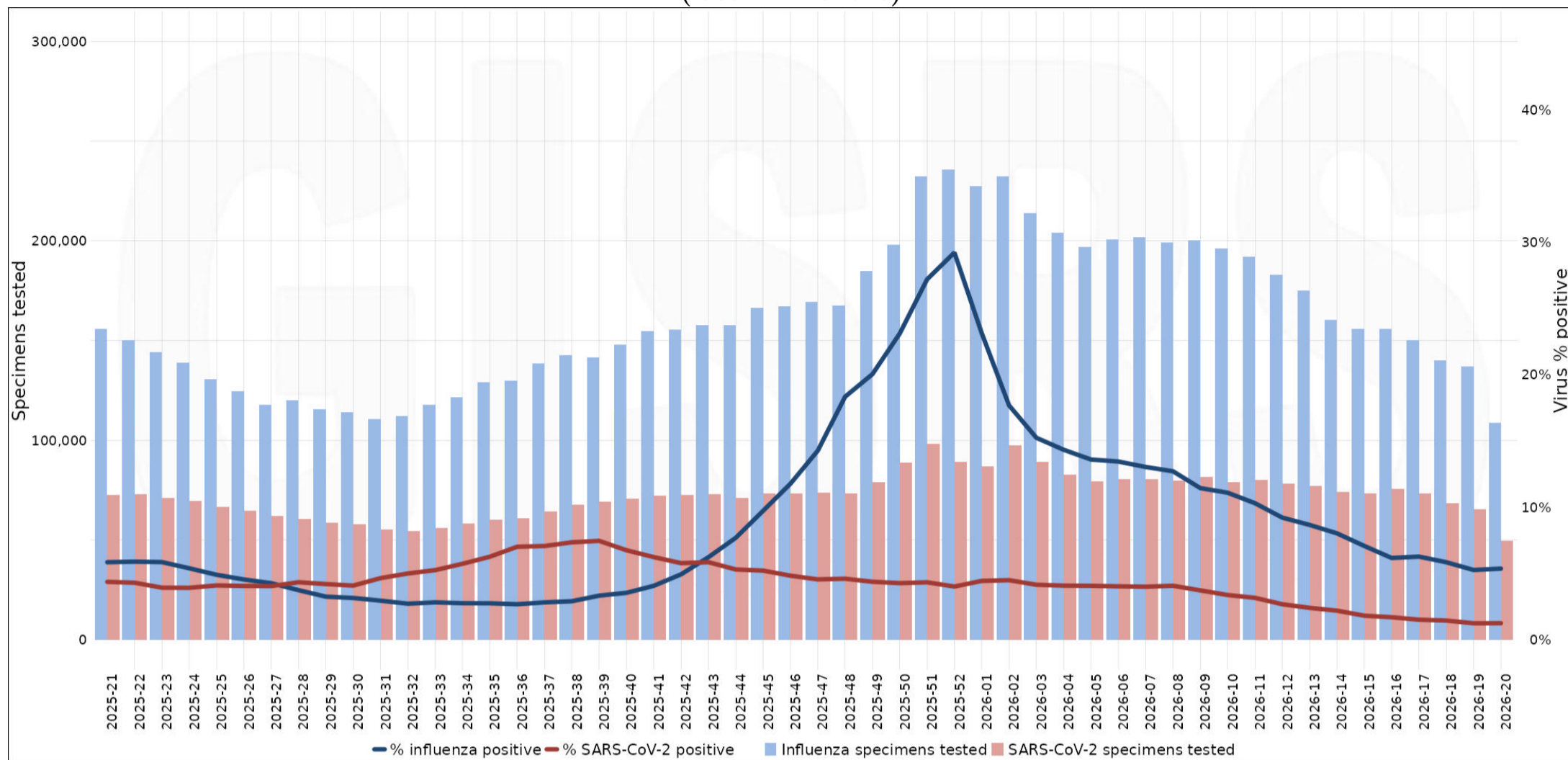
Globally, RSV positivity remained stable and low, with elevated positivity (>10%) reported in a few countries in Tropical South America and in single countries in Central America and the Caribbean and Eastern Europe. Percent positivity was over 30% in two countries in Eastern Africa and a single country in Southern Asia. Increases in activity were observed in single countries in Tropical South America and Southern Asia. [Figures 9 and 10] RSV and influenza activity were both elevated in countries in Central America and the Caribbean, Eastern Africa and Southern Asia.

❖ Severity assessment

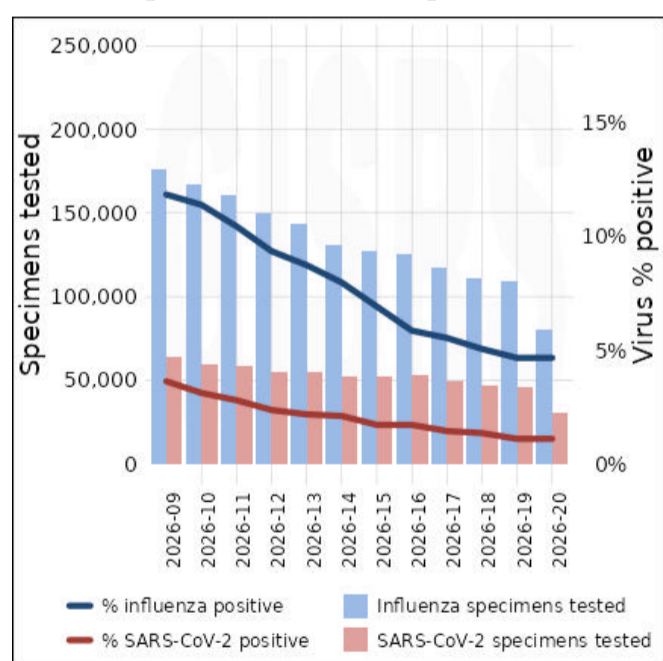
The severity assessments here are reported from countries, areas and territories. Assessments for transmissibility can be reported based on syndromic parameters and/or influenza-specific parameters. In the northern hemisphere temperate and subtropical areas, influenza-specific transmissibility was reported as below seasonal threshold (25); low (4) and moderate (1); transmissibility using syndromic data was reported as below seasonal threshold (26). Influenza-specific transmissibility was reported as low in a single country in the southern hemisphere temperate and subtropical areas and below seasonal threshold in a single country in the tropical areas. [Figures 11 and 12]

Co-circulation of influenza and SARS-CoV-2

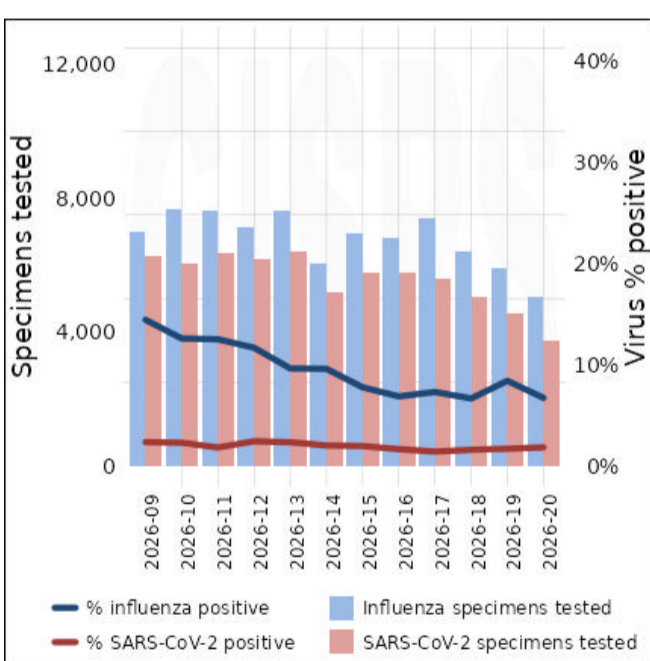
1a) Weekly numbers of influenza and SARS-CoV-2 virus specimens tested and percent positivity at the global level (last 12 months)



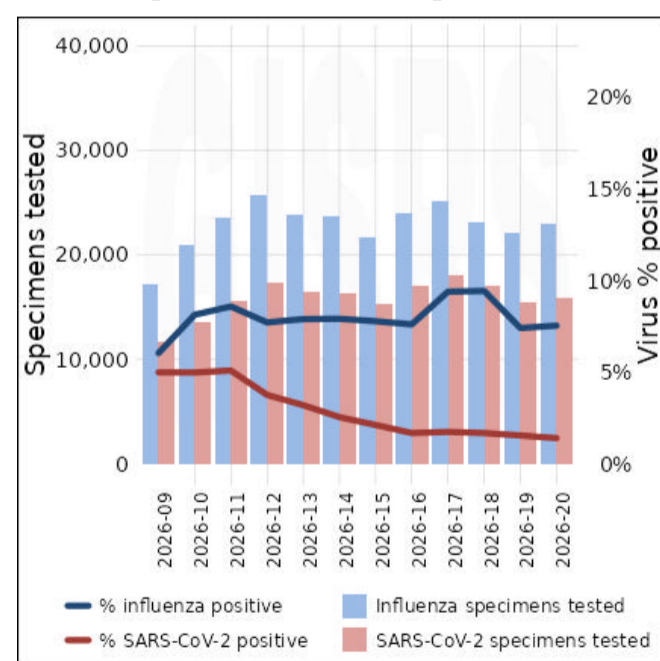
1b) Weekly numbers of influenza and SARS-CoV-2 virus specimens tested and percent positivity in northern hemisphere temperate and subtropical areas



1c) Weekly numbers of influenza and SARS-CoV-2 virus specimens tested and percent positivity in tropical areas

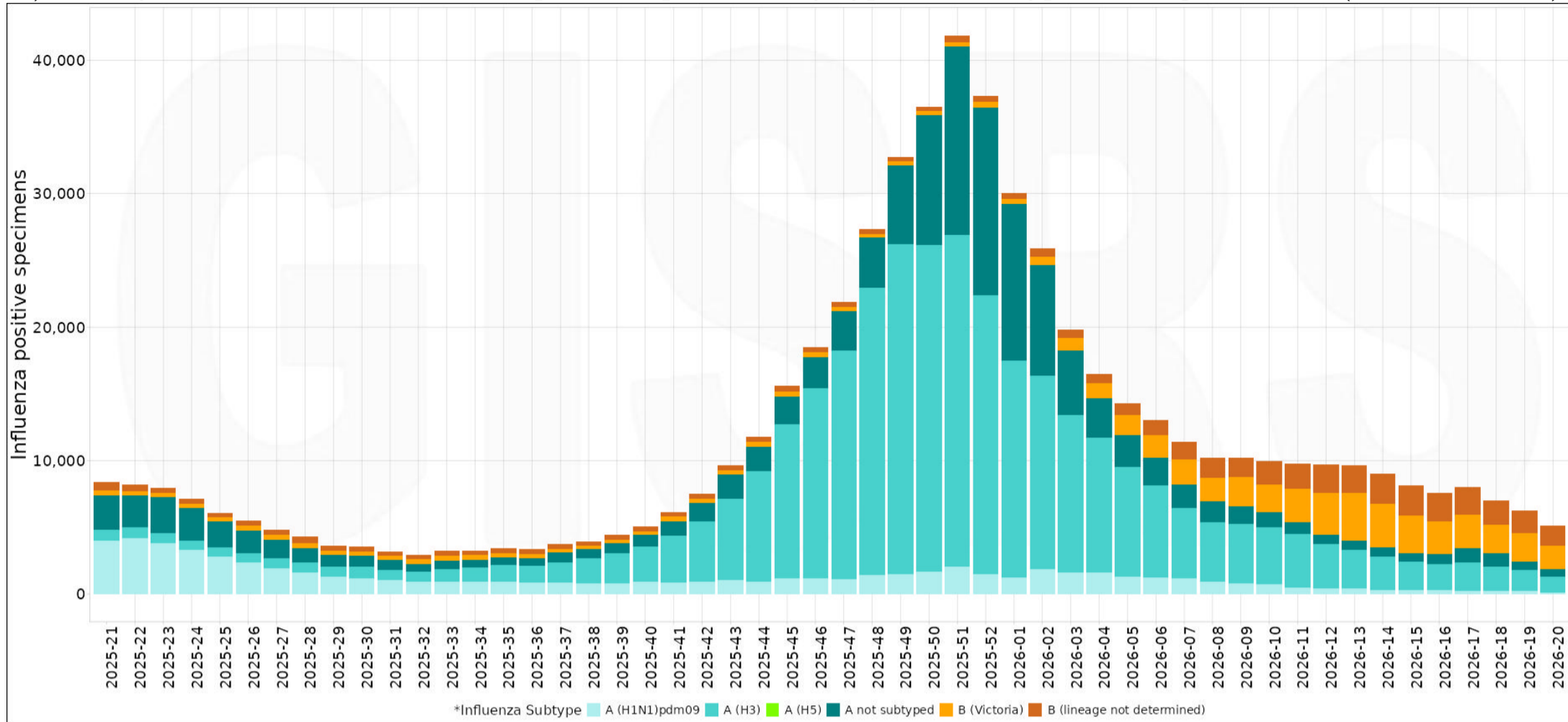


1d) Weekly numbers of influenza and SARS-CoV-2 virus specimens tested and percent positivity in southern hemisphere temperate and subtropical areas

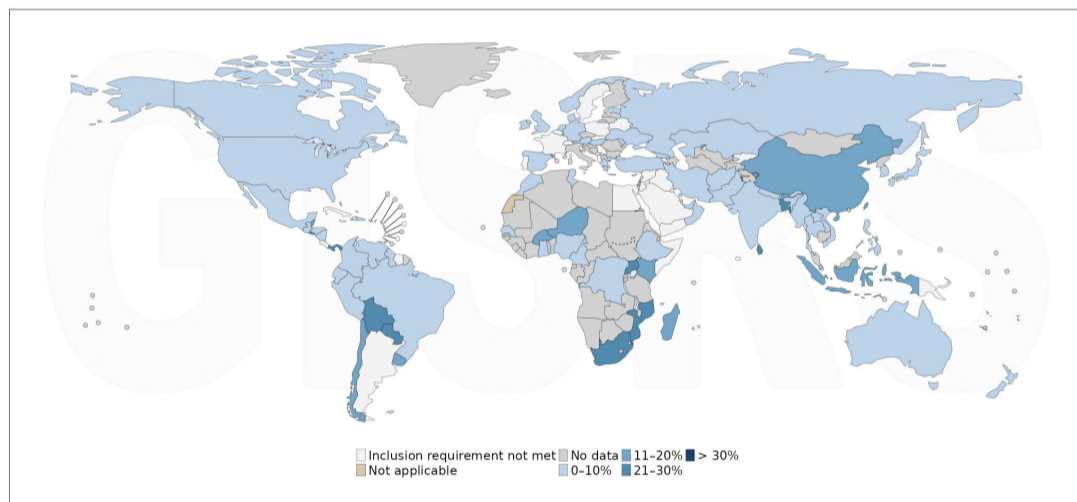


Influenza

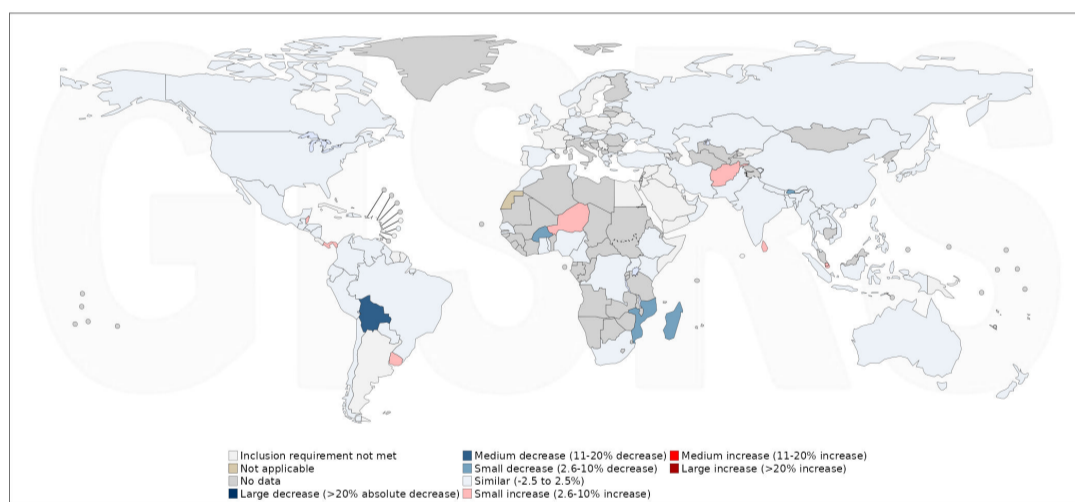
2) Weekly numbers of influenza virus positive specimens by type and subtype at the global level (last 12 months)



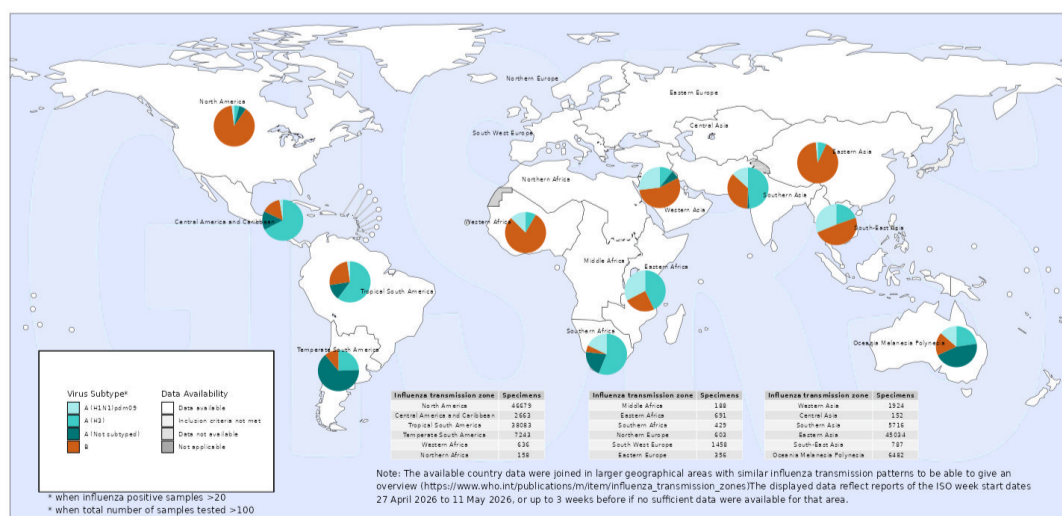
3) Proportions of specimens that tested positive for influenza (year-week: 2026-20)



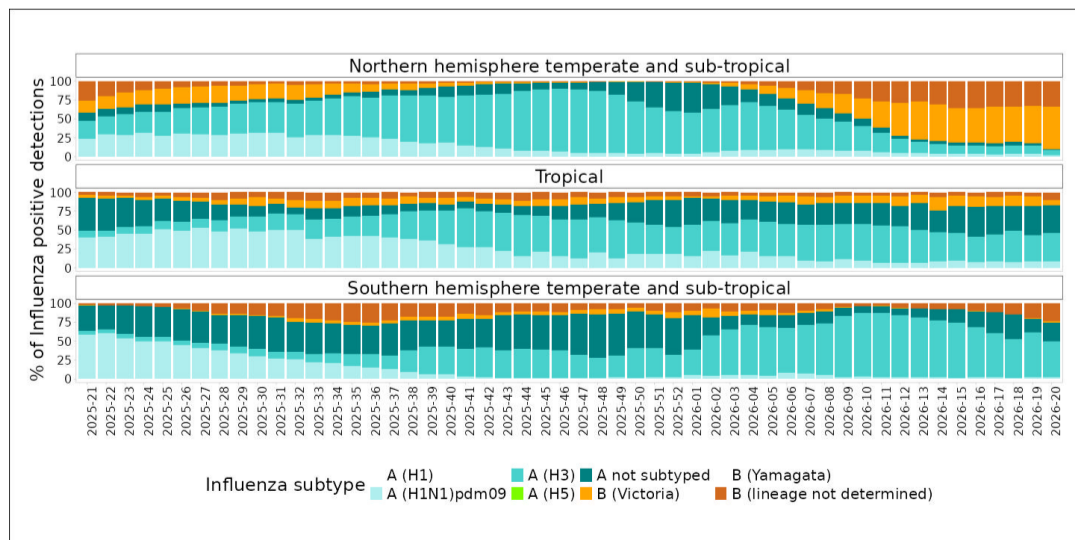
4) Change in proportions of specimens that tested positive for influenza (year-week: 2026-20)



5) Proportions of influenza virus types and subtypes by influenza transmission zones (year-week: 2026-20)

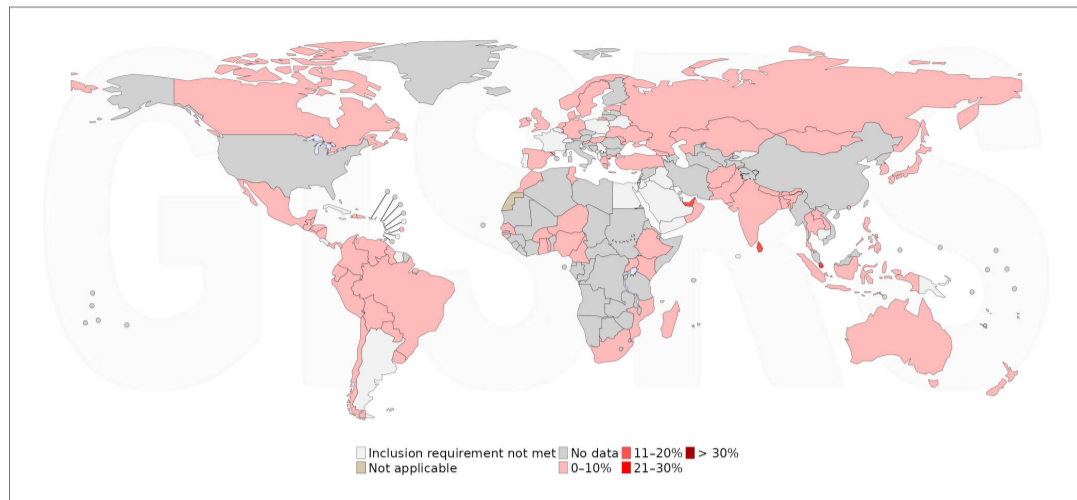


6) Weekly distribution of influenza virus types and subtypes by geographic zone (last 12 months)

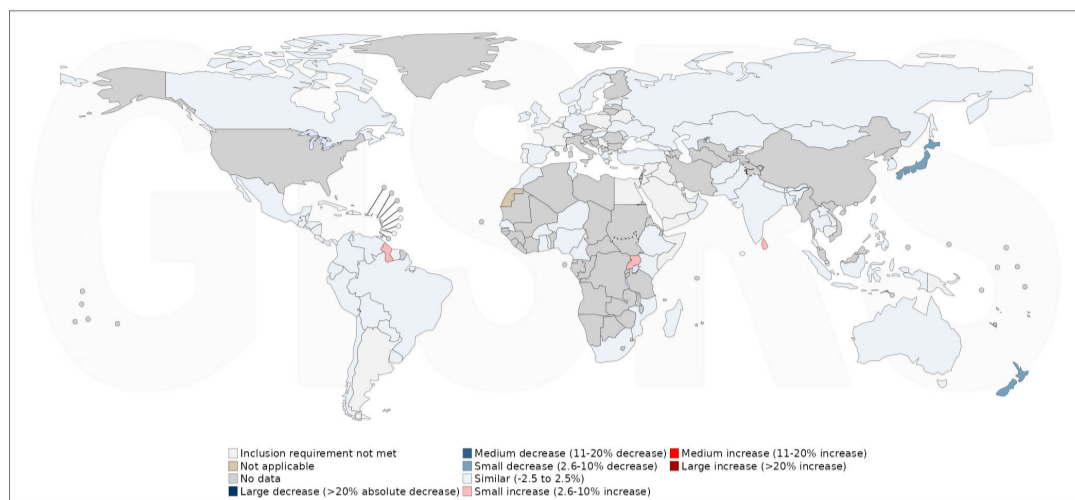


SARS-CoV-2

7) Proportions of specimens that tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 (year-week: 2026-20)

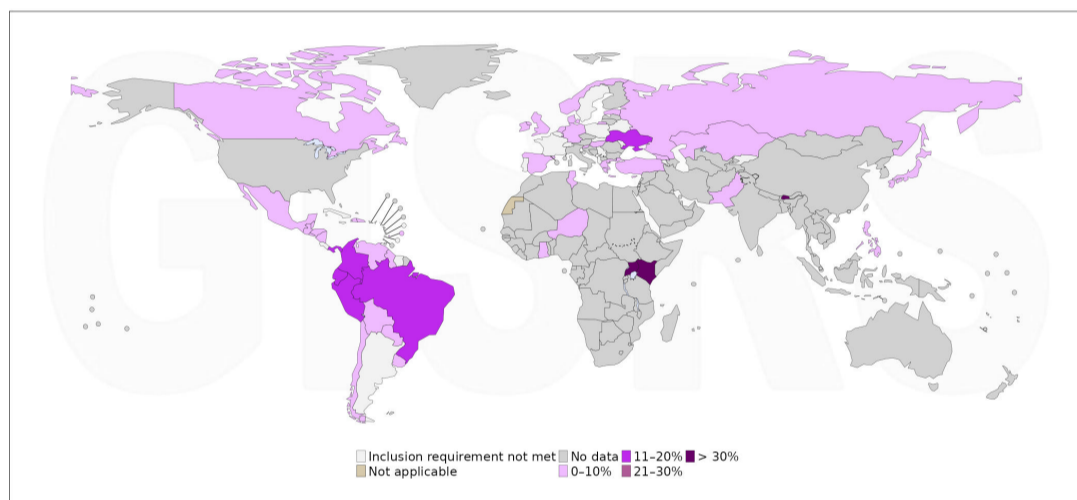


8) Change in proportions of specimens that tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 (year-week: 2026-20)

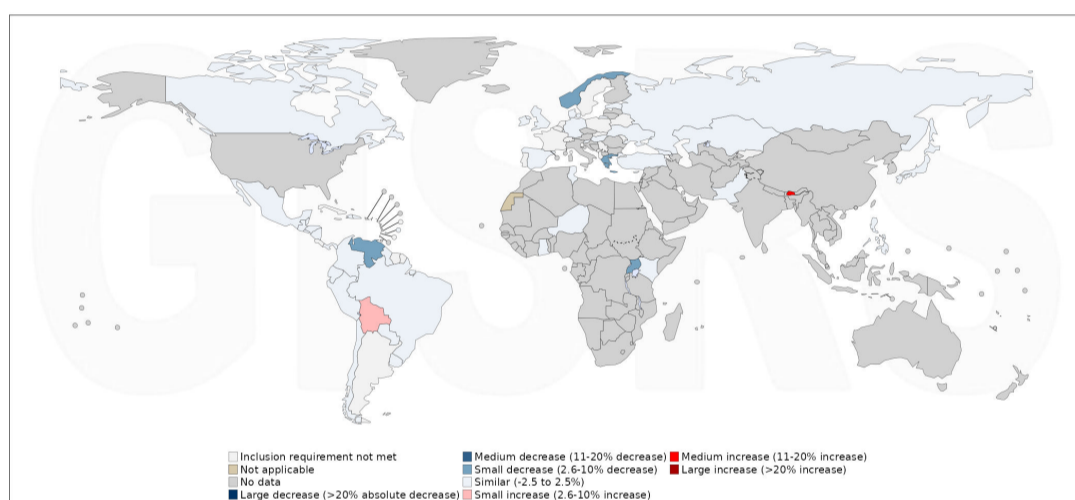


Respiratory syncytial virus

9) Proportions of specimens that tested positive for RSV (year-week: 2026-20)

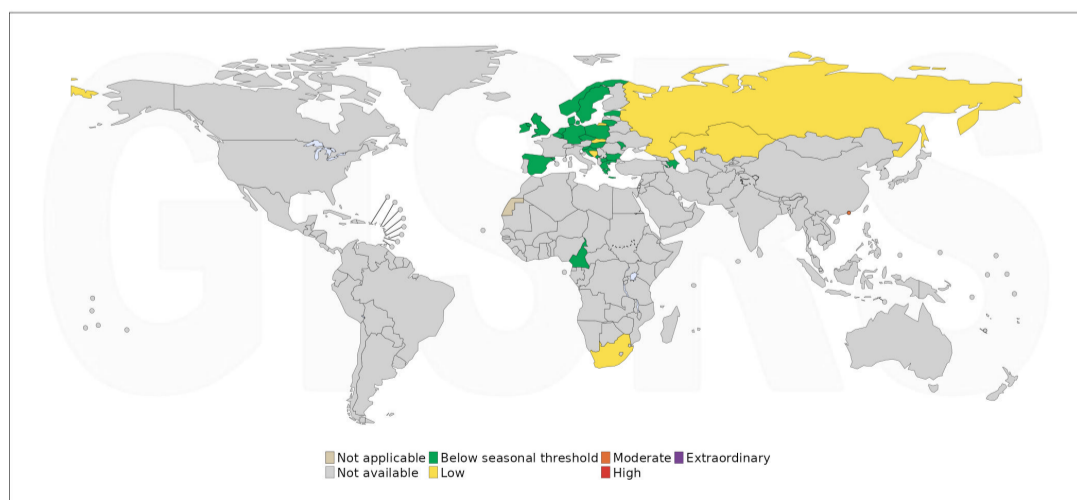


10) Change in proportions of specimens that tested positive for RSV (year-week: 2026-20)

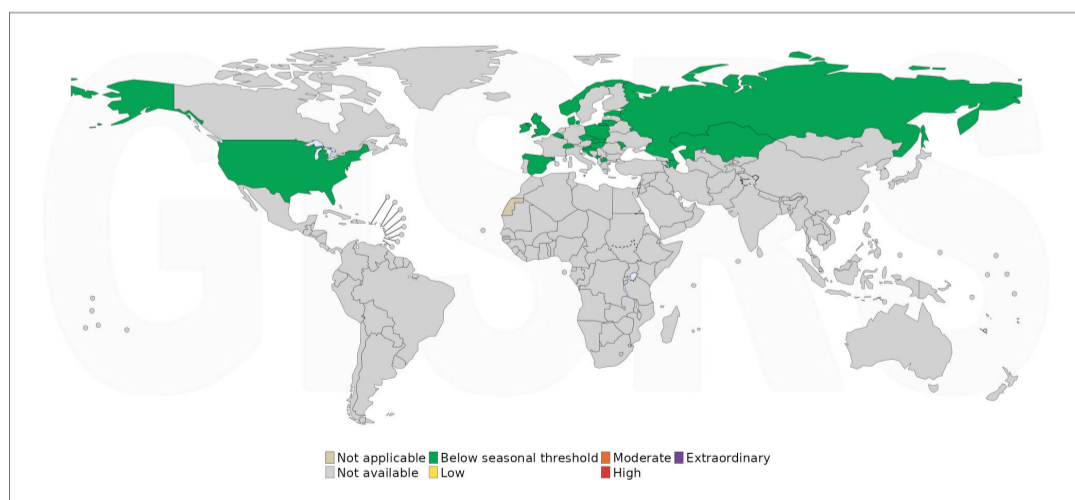


Severity assessment

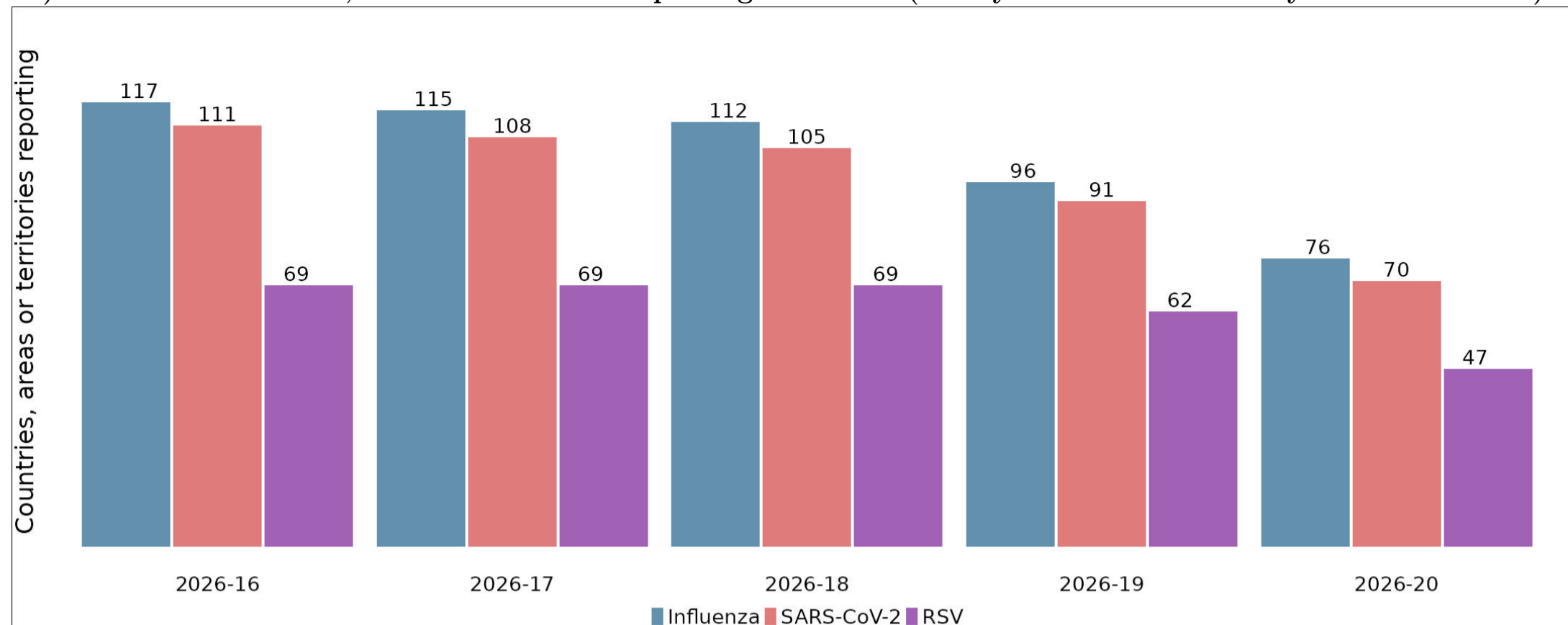
11) Influenza specific transmissibility (year-week: 2026-20)



12) Syndromic transmissibility (year-week: 2026-20)



13) Number of countries, areas or territories reporting to FluNet (from year-week 2026-16 to year-week 2026-20)



Additional information

Data and methods

The data presented in this report originates from virologic surveillance conducted by countries, areas, and territories (CATs) and submitted to WHO FluNet through participation or collaboration with the [Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System \(GISRS\)](#). These CATs employ diverse methodologies to monitor respiratory virus activity, which may result in variations between this report and other surveillance summaries published elsewhere.

This report includes virologic data from both **sentinel surveillance and other systematically conducted surveillance**. Due to differences in surveillance strategies, direct comparisons of percent positivity between CATs should be interpreted with caution. The [data source](#) used for each CAT was decided jointly corresponding with WHO Regional Offices and the respective reporting entity. The completeness of data reporting to FluNet changes over time and countries may revise data reported for previous weeks.

To assess trends, the proportion of specimens tested positive for influenza or SARS-CoV-2 was smoothed over a 3-weeks period. This analysis includes only countries that tested 10 or more specimens in at least two of the three weeks. Weekly changes in the smoothed positivity rate for each virus were calculated as absolute differences from the previous week. These absolute changes were categorized and visualized in the proportion change maps. Analyses stratified by source of surveillance are available through [RespiMart](#).

The [influenza transmission zones](#) map is based on data aggregated over a 3-weeks period, moving backward from the current week until a minimum threshold of 100 tested samples is reached within each influenza transmission zone. Pie charts are displayed on the map only if the total percent positivity in a [influenza transmission zones](#) map is 20% or higher. All trend analyses are based on ISO 8601 calendar week numbering.

Activity summaries are organized by geographical groupings of CATs. These groupings are intended solely for geographic reference and do not imply uniformity in respiratory virus transmission patterns within each group. It is important to note that specimens tested for influenza, SARS-CoV-2, and RSV may not originate from the same sample sources within surveillance systems.

Severity assessments:

The severity assessments here are reported from countries, areas and territories. [WHO's Pandemic influenza severity assessment \(PISA\): a WHO guide to assess the severity of influenza in seasonal epidemics and pandemics, 2nd ed](#) outlines the methods for which countries, areas and territories can derive these severity assessments. Assessments for transmissibility can be reported based on syndromic parameters and/or influenza-specific parameters.

Countries, areas and territories may not provide assessments year-round. The assessments may be revised over time if there is retrospective/delayed reporting or updating of previously reported data. These assessments are made in the context of historical data from the country making the assessment and thus are not comparable between countries. Assessments may differ between countries, areas and territories because differences may exist in the circulating seasonal influenza viruses, the timing of the outbreaks or epidemics, the populations and surveillance systems and the underlying data and methods used to assess severity.

The quality and consistency of influenza surveillance data are influenced by changes in health seeking behaviours, routines in sentinel and non-sentinel sites, national testing priorities and capacities, and public health and social measures implementation. Differences between information products published by WHO, national public health authorities and other sources are to be expected and must be interpreted carefully.

More severity assessment information and outputs can be found [here](#).

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Additional surveillance outputs:

[WHO Influenza Surveillance Outputs](#)

Contact: fluupdate@who.int or [Click here to subscribe](#) to the mailing list.

Summary was generated by the WHO Global Influenza Programme based on data last updated in RespiMart on May 24 2026 10:16:34 PM UTC