Bi-weekly Influenza Situation Update
10 May 2023

Virological Surveillance Summary

The total number of specimens and number of positive specimens reported to FluNet by Western Pacific Region countries and areas between week 1 and week 17 of 2023 are presented in Table 1 below. Influenza A and B are co-circulating, however, the majority of cases reported to week 17 of 2023 have been Influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 (Figure 1). Caution should be taken when interpreting these data as there are reporting delays.

Table 1: Cumulative data reported to FluNet from Western Pacific Region, week 1, 2023 to week 17, 2023

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country (most recent week of report)</th>
<th>Total number of specimens processed</th>
<th>Total number of influenza-positive specimens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia (17 of 2023)</td>
<td>56,472</td>
<td>846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia (14 of 2023)</td>
<td>1,157</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China (17 of 2023)</td>
<td>368,936</td>
<td>110,241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji (14 of 2023)</td>
<td>1,013</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan (15 of 2023)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao People’s Democratic Republic (16 of 2023)</td>
<td>1,682</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia (17 of 2023)</td>
<td>14,432</td>
<td>3,118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolia (13 of 2023)</td>
<td>6,881</td>
<td>1,485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Caledonia</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines (17 of 2023)</td>
<td>1,479</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Korea (17 of 2023)</td>
<td>5,013</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore (17 of 2023)</td>
<td>4,529</td>
<td>1,002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viet Nam (16 of 2023)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: Number of specimens positive for influenza by subtype, Western Pacific Region, Week 17, 2022 to week 17, 2023 (Source: WHO FLUNET)

Influenza surveillance summary

Influenza surveillance in the WHO Western Pacific Region is based on outpatient and inpatient indicator-based surveillance (IBS) systems, as well as event-based surveillance. Case definitions, population groups included and data formats differ among countries. This influenza surveillance summary includes countries and areas where routine IBS is conducted and information is available.
The WHO surveillance case definition for influenza-like illness (ILI) is an acute respiratory infection with a measured fever of ≥38°C and cough, with symptom onset within the last 10 days. For SARI, it is an acute respiratory infection (ARI) with a history of fever or measured fever of ≥38°C and cough, with symptom onset within 10 days that requires hospitalization. Sentinel site data should be interpreted with caution since the number of sites reporting may vary between weeks.

## Countries in the temperate zone of the Northern Hemisphere

In countries within the temperate zone of the Northern Hemisphere, ILI and influenza activity are similar to the corresponding period from previous years.

### Outpatient ILI Surveillance

#### China (North)

During week 17 of 2023, sentinel hospitals in the northern provinces reported ILI% of 3.1%, lower than the last week (3.4%), and higher than the same week of 2020-2022 (1.8%, 2.4%, and 1.7%). (Figure 2).

![Figure 2: Percentage of visits for ILI at sentinel hospitals in northern China, 2020-2023](Source: China National Influenza Center)

#### Mongolia

During week 17 of 2023, the ILI activity in Mongolia increased to 46 ILI cases per 10,000 population. This is above the upper tolerance limit (Figure 3).

![Figure 3: Proportion of outpatient ILI visits per 10,000 people in Mongolia, 2020-2023](Source: Mongolia National Influenza Center)
**Republic of Korea**

In week 17 2023, overall weekly influenza-like illness (ILI) rate was 23.0% per 1,000 outpatient visits, which was higher than 19.9‰ recorded in the previous week. (Figure 4).

![Figure 4: Weekly ILI incidence rate per 1,000 outpatient consultations, Republic of Korea, 2018-2023](Source: Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency)

**Sentinel influenza surveillance**

**Japan**

In week 17 of 2023, the number of cases reported weekly by sentinel hospital sites remained low in Japan. The number of cases in 2023 was consistently low (Figure 5).

![Figure 5: Number of influenza cases reported weekly per reporting sentinel hospital site, Japan 2013-2023](Source: Japan National Institute of Infectious Diseases)
Countries/areas in the tropical zone

ILI and influenza activity is similar to the corresponding period from previous years in some of the countries and areas in the tropical zone.

**Hong Kong SAR (China) – ILI and hospital Surveillance**

The latest surveillance data showed that the overall seasonal influenza activity in Hong Kong remained active. In week 17, the average consultation rate for influenza-like illness (ILI) among sentinel general outpatient clinics (GOPC) was 5.2 ILI cases per 1,000 consultations, which was higher than 3.3 recorded in the previous week (Figure 6). The average consultation rate for ILI among sentinel private medical practitioner (PMP) clinics was 49.3 ILI cases per 1,000 consultations, which was higher than 45.0 recorded in the previous week (Figure 7).

**China (South) - ILI Surveillance**

During week 17, the percentage of outpatient or emergency visits for ILI (ILI%) at national sentinel hospitals in southern provinces was 5.2%, lower than the last week (6.0%), and higher than the same week of 2020-2022 (2.3%, 3.7% and 3.1%) (Figure 8).

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*Figure 6: ILI consultation rates at sentinel general outpatient clinics, Hong Kong SAR 2020-2023*  
(Source: Hong Kong Centre for Health Protection)

*Figure 7: ILI consultation rates at sentinel private doctors, Hong Kong SAR 2019-2023*  
(Source: Hong Kong Centre for Health Protection)

*Figure 8: Percentage of visits due to ILI at national sentinel hospitals in Southern China, 2019-2023*  
(Source: China National Influenza Center)
**Singapore** – Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI) Surveillance

In week 17 of 2023, the average daily number of patients seeking treatment in the polyclinics for ARI is 2,677 (over 5.5 working days) (Figure 9). The proportion of patients with influenza-like illness (ILI) among the polyclinic attendances for ARI is 0.5. The overall positivity rate for influenza among ILI samples (n= 1403) in the community was 20.5% in the past 4 weeks. Of the 421 specimens tested positive for influenza in Mar 2023, 258 were positive for Influenza A(H3N2) (61.3%), 94 were positive for Influenza A(pH1N1) (22.3%), 1 was positive for Influenza A(LVT) (0.2%), and 68 were positive for Influenza B (16.2%) (Figure 10).

![Figure 9: Average daily polyclinic attendances for ARI in Singapore, 2022-2023](Source: Singapore Ministry of Health)

![Figure 10: Monthly influenza surveillance for ARI in Singapore, 2018-2023](Source: Singapore Ministry of Health)

**Lao PDR**

During week 17 of 2023, the National Center for Laboratory and Epidemiology received data from all seven sentinel sites in Lao PDR. The number of ILI cases presenting at sentinel sites was 45 cases higher than the previous week. There were 141 samples tested for influenza in week 17, 2023. Influenza A/pdmH1N1 was identified (n=16) (Figure 11).

![Figure 11: Weekly number of ILI cases at sentinel sites (2019 to 2023)](Source: Lao National Center for Laboratory and Epidemiology)
Cambodia
In week 17 of 2023, the Ministry of Health received data from all seven sentinel sites in Cambodia. The number of ILI cases in Cambodia slightly increased between week 16 (129 cases) and week 17 (144 cases). 6.25% positivity rate was reported for this week (Figure 12).

![ILI Weekly Positive Rate](image)

**Figure 12:** Number of ILI cases from seven sentinel sites and influenza positivity rate by the week, of 2020-2023, Cambodia
(Source: Communicable Disease Control Department, Cambodia Ministry of Health)

Countries in the temperate zone of the southern hemisphere
In the temperate zone of the southern hemisphere, influenza activity is reported during the influenza season, usually starting in May in Australia and New Zealand.

Australia – Laboratory-confirmed influenza
In the year to 30 April 2023, there have been 32,047 notifications of laboratory-confirmed influenza reported to the National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System in Australia. There were 6,098 laboratory-confirmed influenza notifications with a diagnosis date this fortnight (Monday 17 April to Sunday 30 April 2023), a decrease compared to 6,853 notifications in the previous fortnight. From March 2023 the number of notifications of laboratory-confirmed influenza has gradually increased. The number of notifications year-to-date is higher than the 5-year average, but lower than observed in the same period in 2019 (Figure 13).

![Notifications of laboratory-confirmed influenza by month and week from 2016 to 2023 in Australia](image)

**Figure 13:** Notifications of laboratory-confirmed influenza by month and week from 2016 to 2023 in Australia
(Source: National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System, Australian Department of Health)
**New Zealand – Influenza like Illness**

In the week ending of 30 April 2023, the influenza like illness (ILI) general practitioner consultation (Figure 14) rates decreased compared to the previous week. National influenza-like illness (ILI) activity in the community remains at low expected levels for this time of year. However, in Counties Manukau, Tairawhiti, Lakes, and South Canterbury, ILI activity is above the national rate.

![Figure 14: Weekly rates of general practice ILI consultations per 100,000 people in New Zealand in 2015-2023](Source: New Zealand Institute of Environmental Science and Research)

**Pacific Island Countries and Areas (PICs) - ILI Surveillance**

In week 17 of 2023, 18 out of 21 PICs reported ILI surveillance data. No reports are available for American Samoa, Guam, and Nauru. The following countries reported increased influenza-like illness activity: Kiribati, New Caledonia, Niue and Tuvalu (Figure 15).
Global influenza situation updates

Virological update

Global update

Others:

- New recommended composition of influenza virus vaccines for use in the 2023 southern hemisphere influenza season [Link]
- Recommended composition of influenza virus vaccines for use in the 2022-2023 northern hemisphere influenza season [Link]
- WHO Consultation on the Composition of Influenza Virus Vaccines for Use in the 2023 Southern Hemisphere Influenza Season 19-22 September 2022 [Link]
- WHO issues updated influenza vaccines position paper [Link]

WHO’s YouTube Channel: film exploring a number of key aspects of the constant evolution of influenza viruses and associated impacts on public health. [Arabic], [Chinese], [English], [French], [Russian], [Spanish]