

Respiratory Viruses Surveillance Bulletin

Epidemiological Week 3
(Up to 18 January 2026)



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Regional situation at a glance

- Influenza positivity increased from 17% in week 2 to 20% in week 3 of 2026, and SARS-CoV-2 positivity remains below 5% (Figure 1). The predominant circulating influenza subtype remains influenza A(H3), however increases in influenza B(Victoria) are noted (Figure 2).
- Influenza activity is increasing in some northern hemisphere countries: Cambodia and Republic of Korea, but is declining in Brunei Darussalam, China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Mongolia, the Philippines, and Viet Nam.
- Among southern hemisphere countries, only Australia and New Zealand have updated information, and influenza activity in both countries remains low.

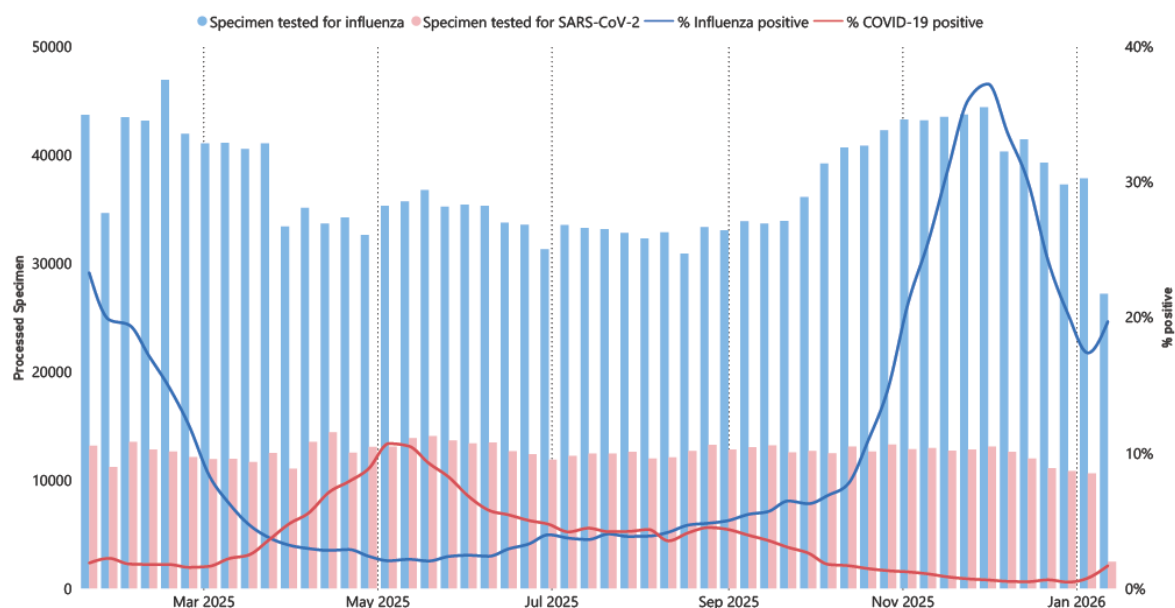


Figure 1: Number of sentinel surveillance specimens tested for Influenza and SARS-CoV-2 and positivity rates as reported to RespiMart from countries and areas of the Western Pacific Region, from 20 January 2025 to 18 January 2026 (Source: [GISRS surveillance data reported to RespiMart](#))*

Note: Sentinel surveillance specimens are not tested for SARS-CoV-2 in Brunei Darussalam, China, Fiji and Malaysia. As data submission may not be completed for the most recent week, current trends should be interpreted with caution.

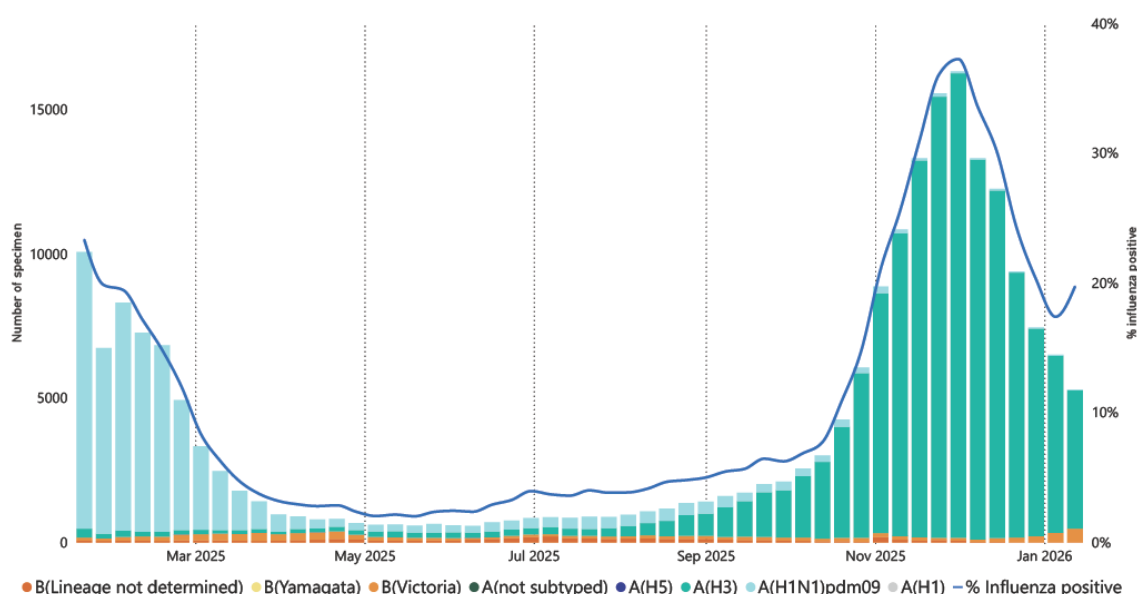


Figure 2. Influenza virus detections by subtype in the Western Pacific Region, 20 January 2025 to 18 January 2026 (Source: [Influenza Laboratory Surveillance Information](#))

Updates from countries and areas by WHO transmission zones

The figures below illustrate sentinel surveillance data submitted to RespiMart from countries and areas in the Western Pacific Region. Countries and areas are grouped by transmission zone¹. Typically, all sentinel surveillance specimens are tested for influenza and SARS-CoV-2. However, in selected countries (Brunei Darussalam, China, and Malaysia), sentinel surveillance specimens are only tested for influenza. Additionally, Pacific island countries and areas are currently only reporting syndromic influenza like illness (ILI) data as virological testing has not been initiated.

¹ [Influenza transmission zones](#)

For each country and area in a WHO transmission zone, data are presented for the number of specimens tested and percent positivity for influenza and/or SARS-CoV-2, and the circulating influenza subtypes. Each figure illustrates trends based on a rolling 52-week timeframe. The vertical axis scale differs by country to reflect the weekly number of samples tested and to optimize the clarity of the charts.

Influenza and SARS-CoV-2 activity in the Eastern Asia transmission zone

Influenza activity has decreased in all countries in the Eastern Asia transmission zone, except for the Republic of Korea, where positivity has slightly increased from 34% in week 2 to 39% in week 3 (Figure 3) and a surge of influenza B infections was observed in the past week (Figure 4). Positivity rates have dropped below 40% in all countries and areas in the transmission zone. In this transmission zone, influenza positivity ranged from around 3% (China, Hong Kong SAR) to 39% (Japan) in the most recent week. SARS-CoV-2 positivity continues to remain below 5% for countries in this transmission zone, excepting Japan where positivity increased to 14% in week 2. The predominant circulating influenza subtype is influenza A(H3) in this transmission zone, except for Republic of Korea where influenza B(Victoria) has become the predominant subtype as of week 3 (Figure 4).

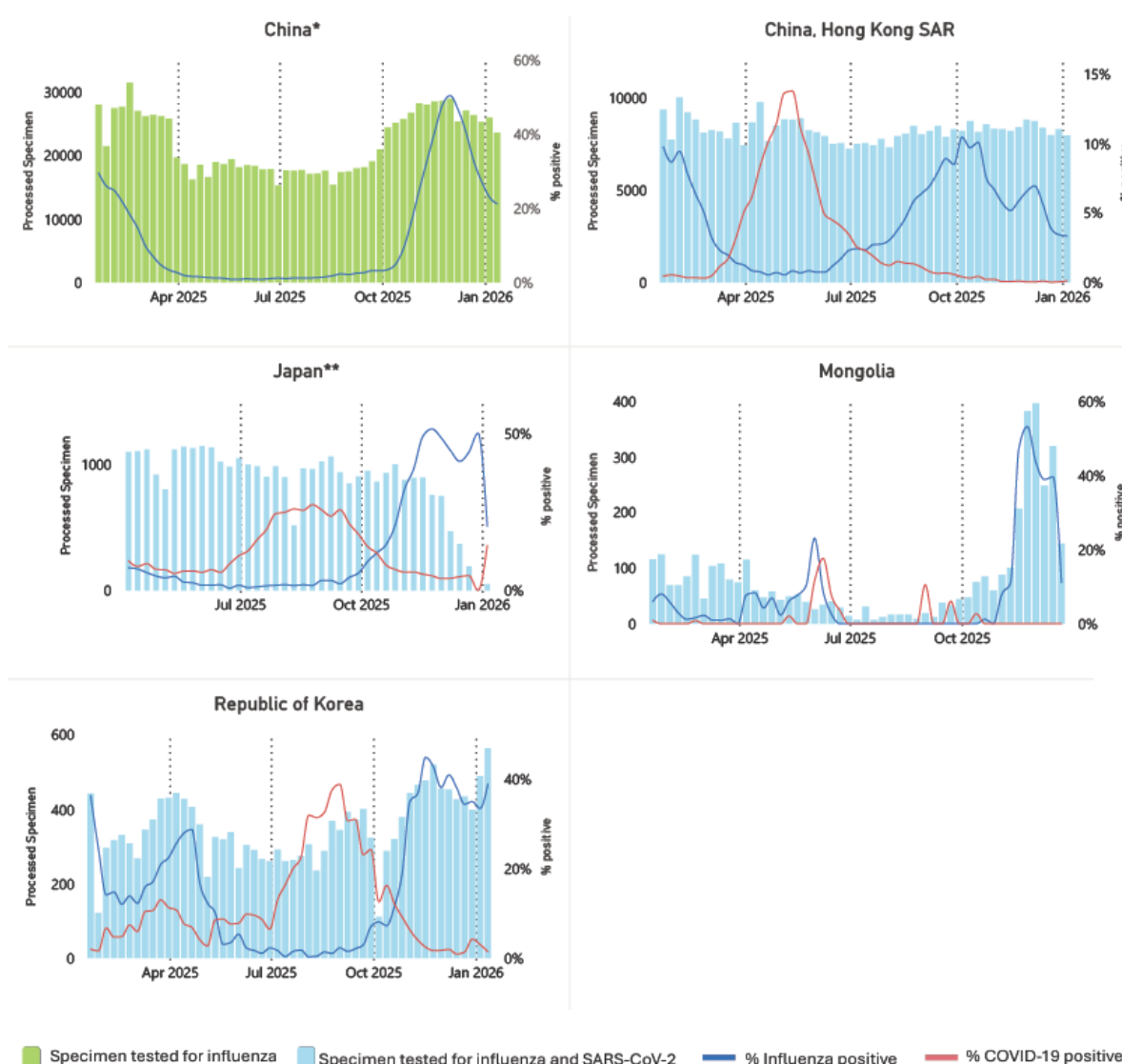


Figure 3: Number of specimens processed and % of specimens positive for influenza and SARS-CoV-2 by week, 20 January 2025 to 18 January 2026

* China does not test sentinel specimens for SARS-CoV-2. Data for China and China Hong Kong SAR, are presented separately.

** Denominator data are available for Japan since week 15, 2025.

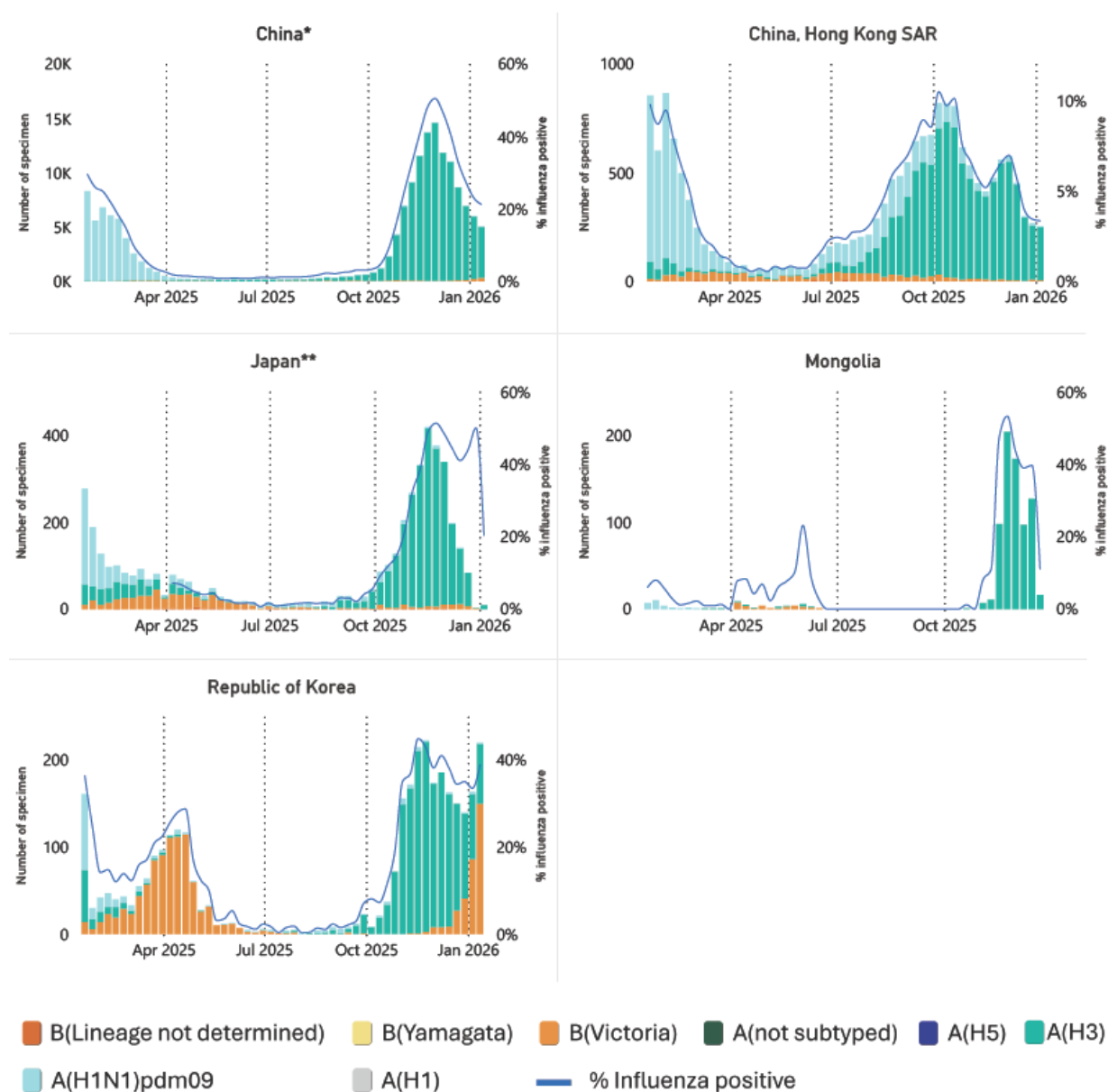


Figure 4: Influenza virus detections by subtype by week, 20 January 2025 to 18 January 2026

* Data for China and China Hong Kong SAR, are presented separately.

** Denominator data are available for Japan since week 15, 2025.

Influenza and SARS-CoV-2 activity in the South-East Asia transmission zone

Influenza activity remains mixed in the South-East Asia transmission zone. Positivity has been increasing in Cambodia, while decreasing trends have been observed in Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Viet Nam during the reporting period (Figure 5). SARS-CoV-2 positivity remains below 5% in this transmission zone except for Indonesia and the Philippines, where it reached 5% and 6%, respectively (Figure 5). The predominant circulating subtype is influenza A(H3) in this transmission zone although some countries, including Cambodia and Lao PDR also have influenza B(Victoria) circulating (Figure 6).

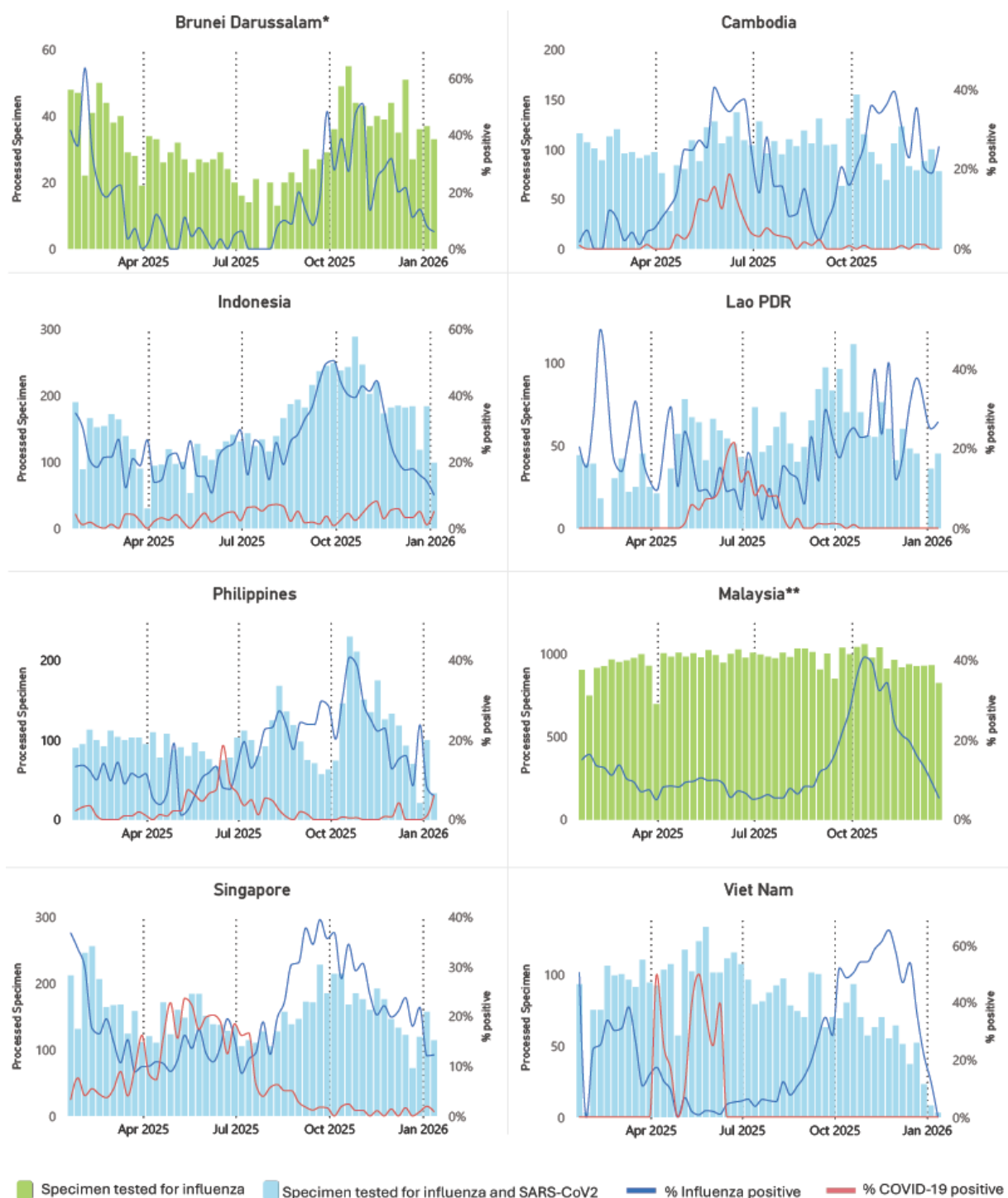


Figure 5: Number of specimens processed and % of specimens positive for influenza by week, 20 January 2025 to 18 January 2026

* Brunei Darussalam only tests sentinel specimens for influenza.

** Malaysia only tests sentinel specimens for influenza.

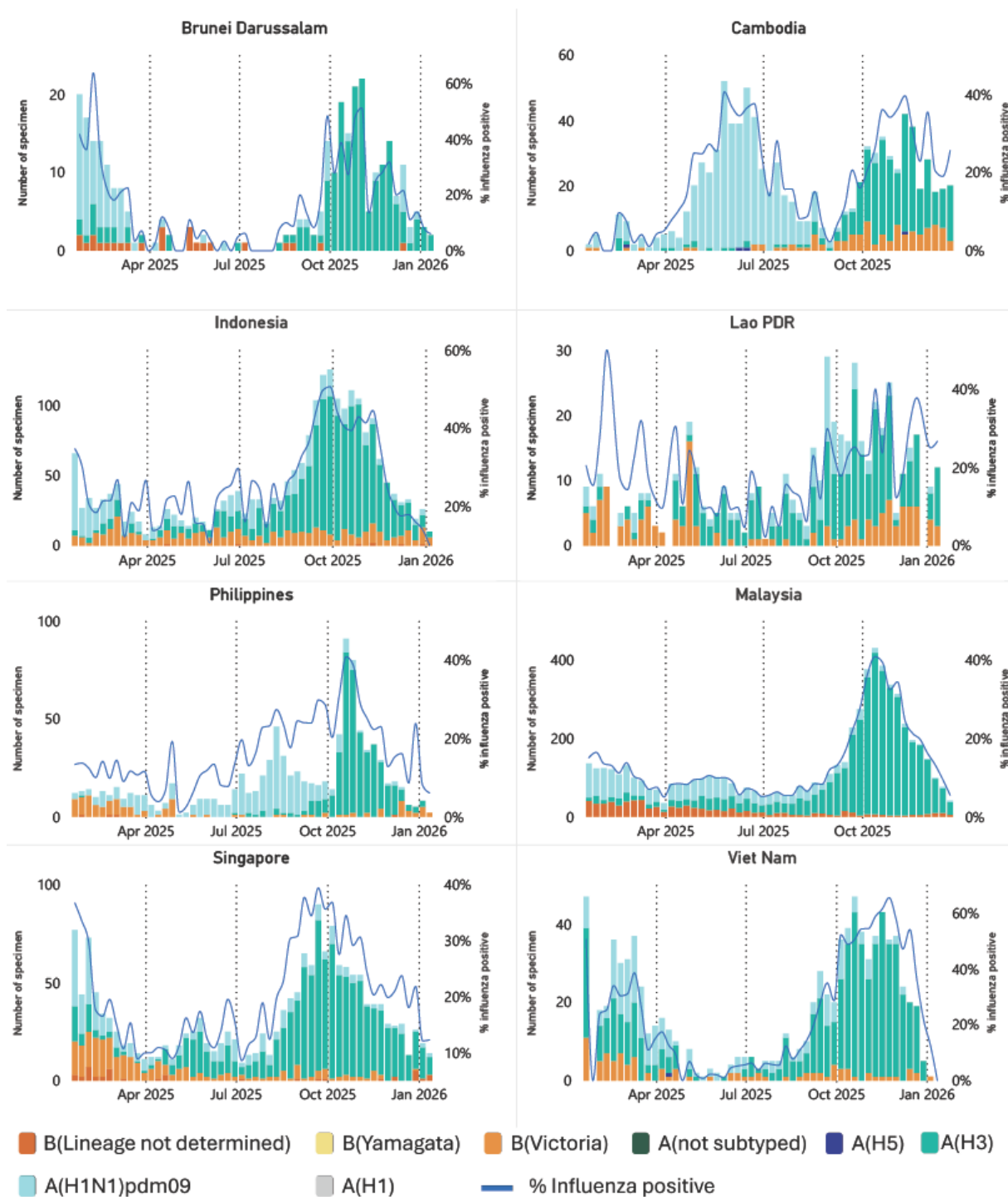


Figure 6: Influenza virus detections by subtype by week, 20 January 2025 to 18 January 2026

Influenza and SARS-CoV-2 activity in the Oceania, Melanesia and Polynesia

Influenza activity has declined in New Zealand, from 27% in week 52 of 2025 to 19% in week 1 of 2026. Positivity rates in Australia remain below 5% in week 3 of 2026. The predominant circulating influenza subtype is influenza A(H3) in this transmission zone (Figure 8).

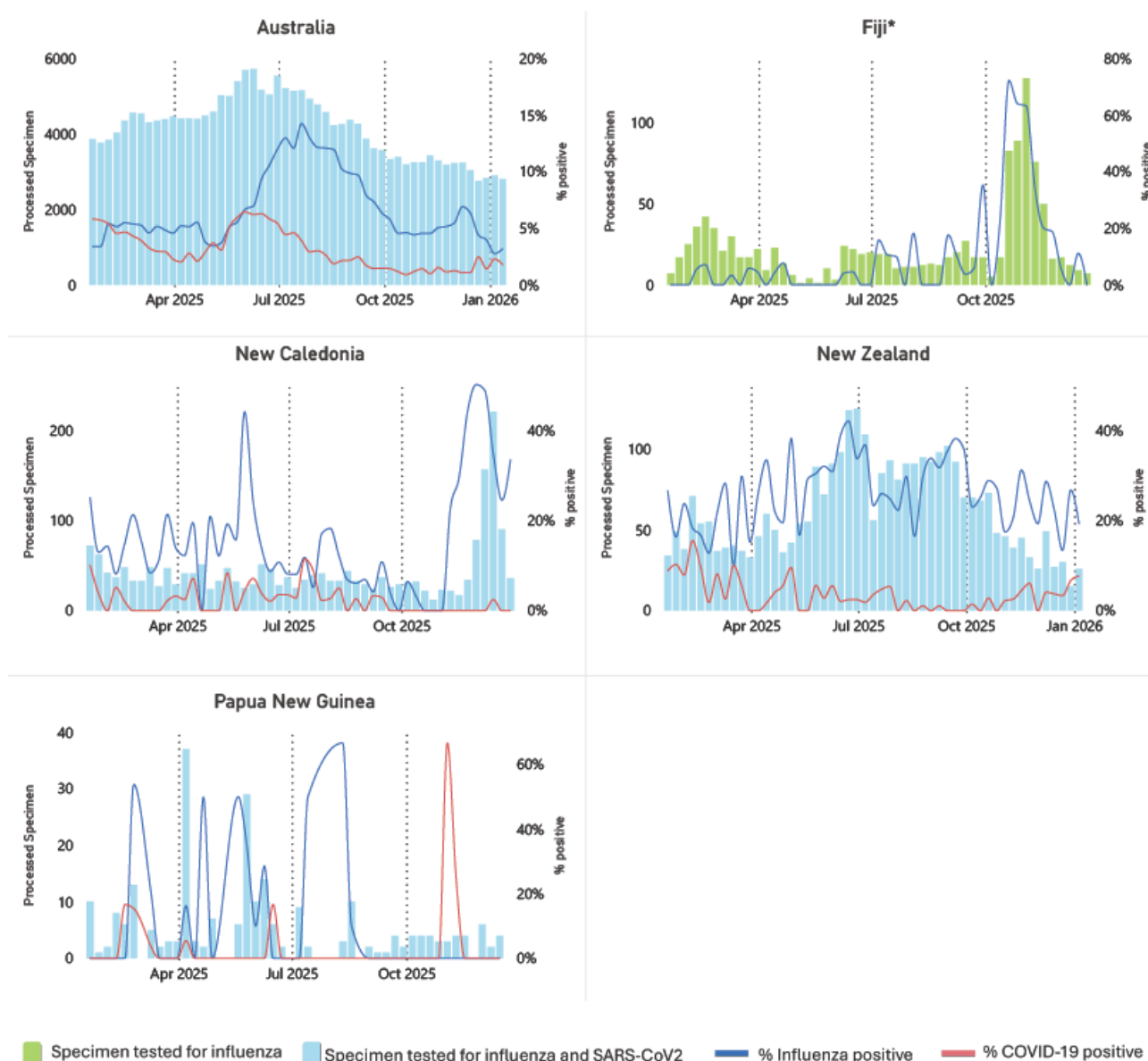


Figure 7: Number of specimens processed and % of specimens positive for influenza and SARS-CoV-2 by week, 20 January 2025 to 18 January 2026

* Fiji only tests sentinel specimens for influenza.

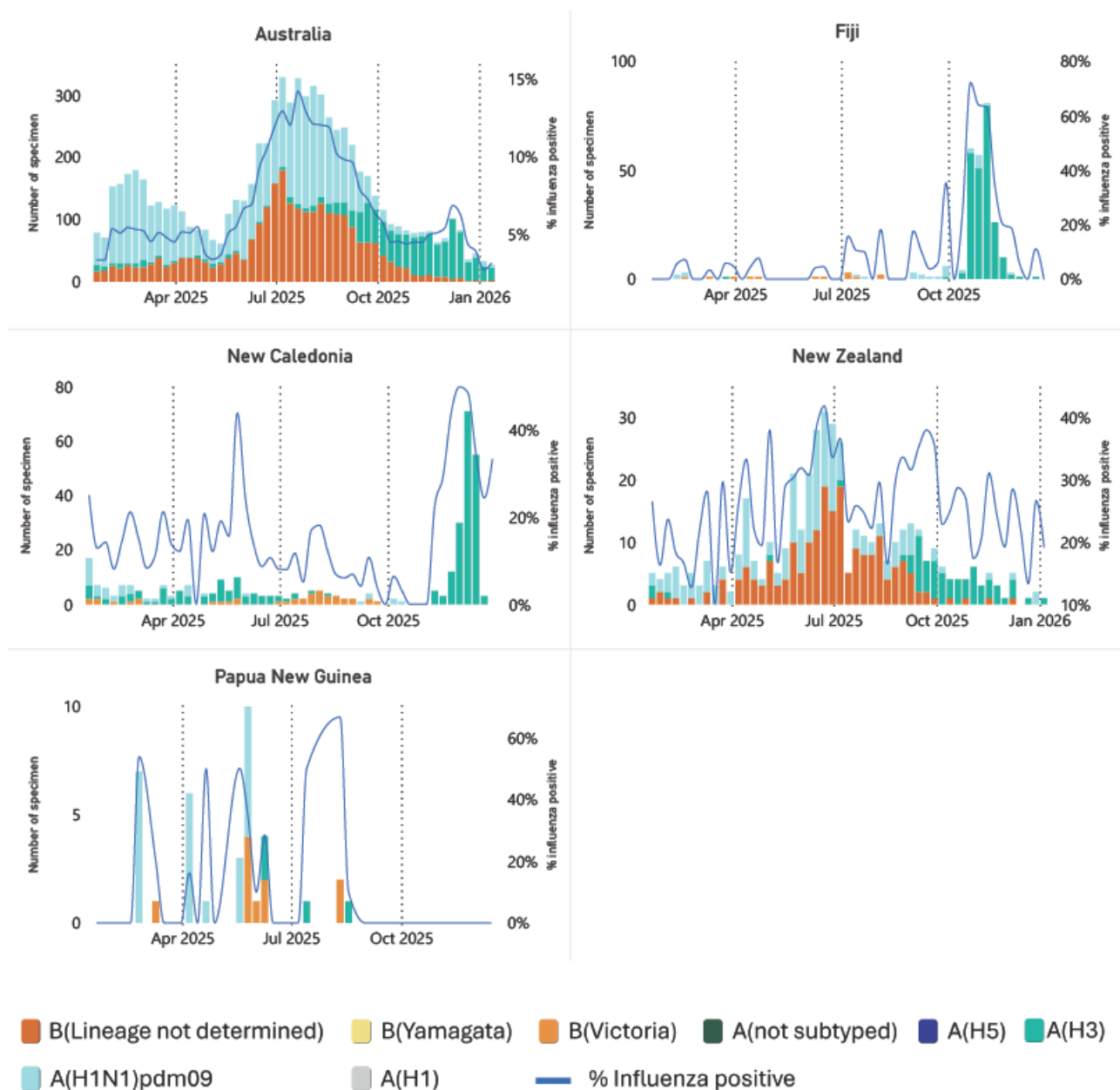


Figure 8: Influenza virus detections by subtype by week, 20 January 2025 to 18 January 2026

Influenza like illness (ILI) situation in the Pacific Island countries and areas (PICs)

The PICs collect data weekly for ILI and SARI through the Pacific Syndromic Surveillance System (PSSS) and report weekly ILI data to RespiMart. There was no update in this reporting period. Data up to week 52 has been received from PSSS and is presented below (Figure 9a, 9b).

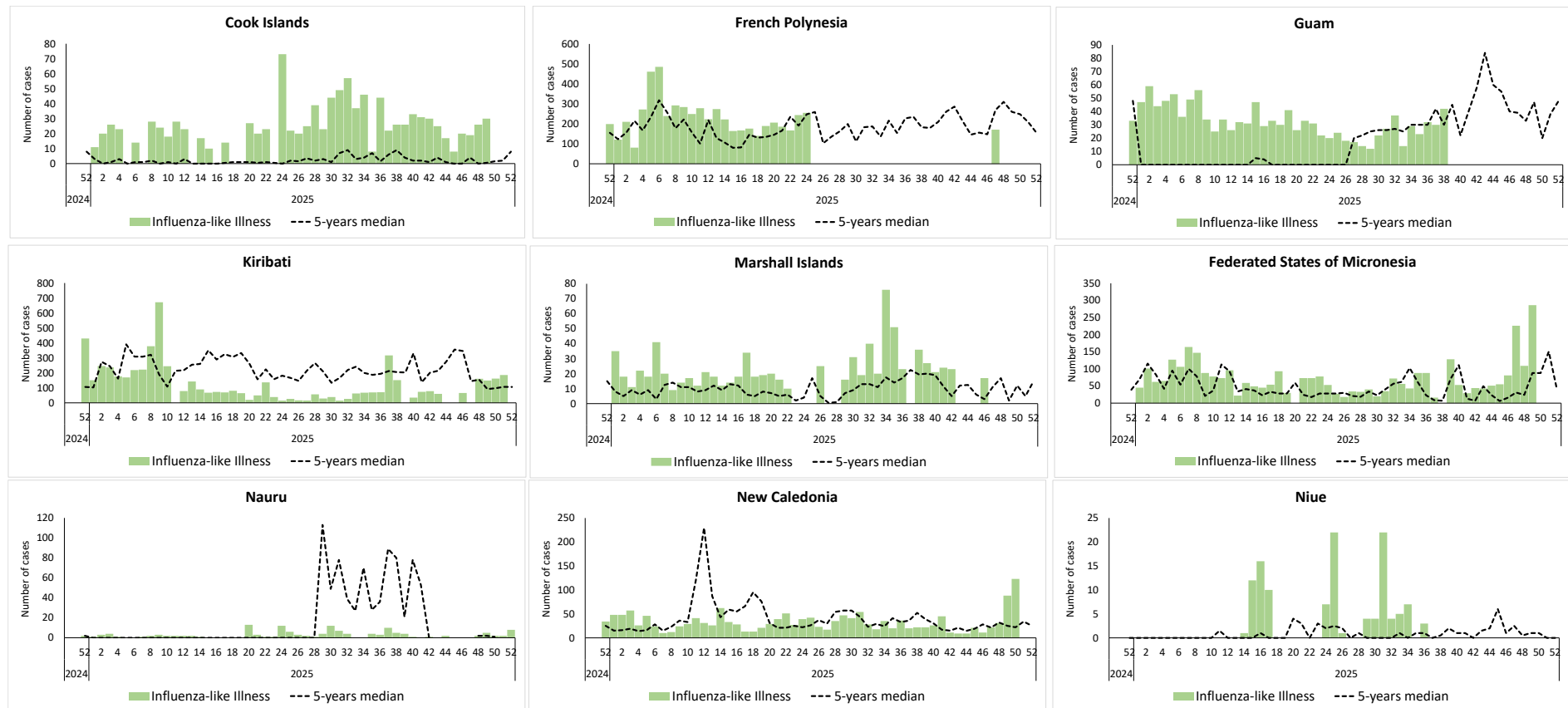


Figure 9a: Reported cases of influenza-like illness from week 52, 2024 to week 52, 2025 (Source: Pacific Syndromic Surveillance System Weekly Bulletin)

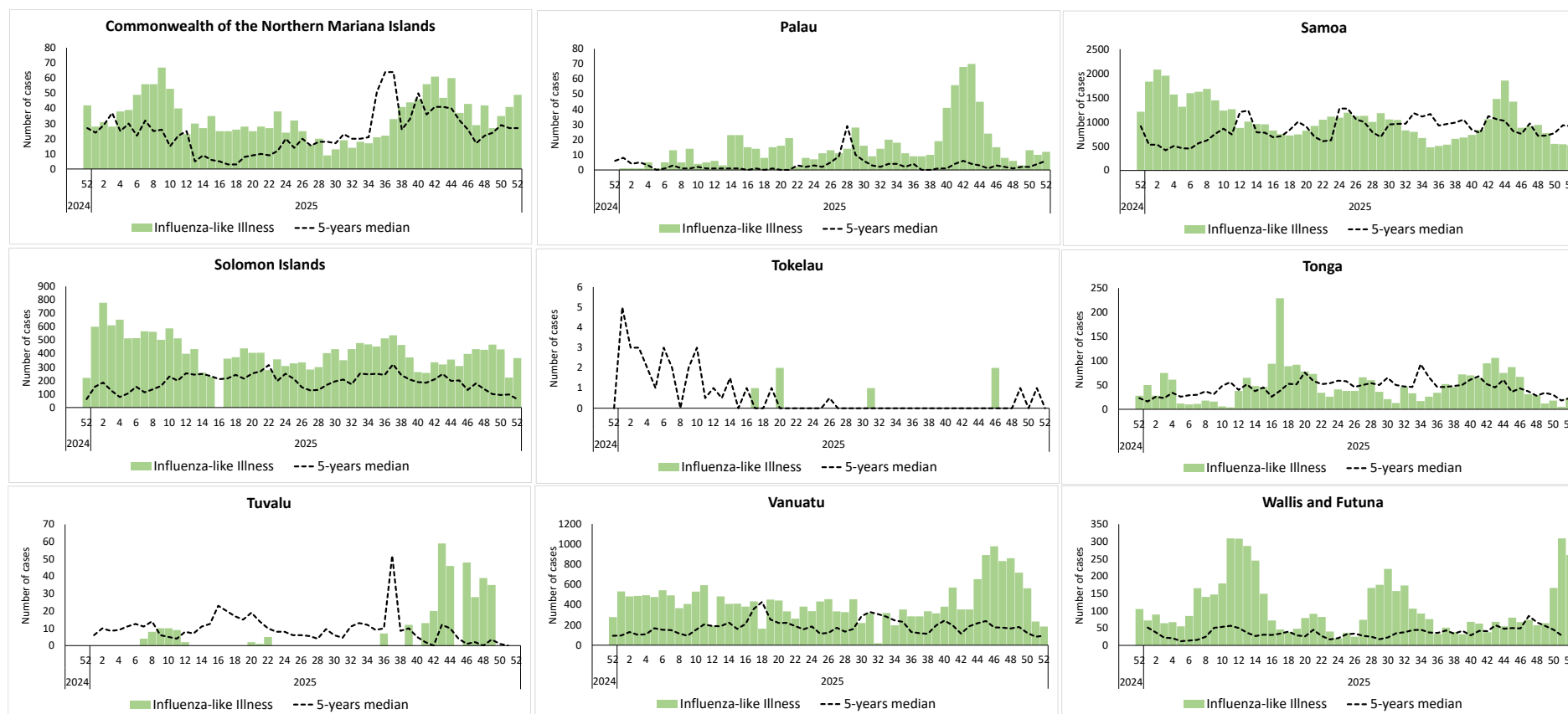


Figure 9b: Reported cases of influenza-like illness from week 52, 2024 to week 52, 2025 (Source: Pacific Syndromic Surveillance System Weekly Bulletin)

Tracking SARS-CoV-2 variants in the Western Pacific Region

As of 27 January 2026, the relative frequency of circulating SARS-CoV-2 variants in the Western Pacific Region, based on sequences submitted to GISAID (Table 1), is as follows: NB.1.8.1 at 57.35%, XFG at 27.94%, KP.3.1.1 at 8.82% and remaining variants collectively at 5.88% (Figure 10). Contribution of SARS-CoV-2 sequences to GISAID for regional analysis is indicated in Table 1.

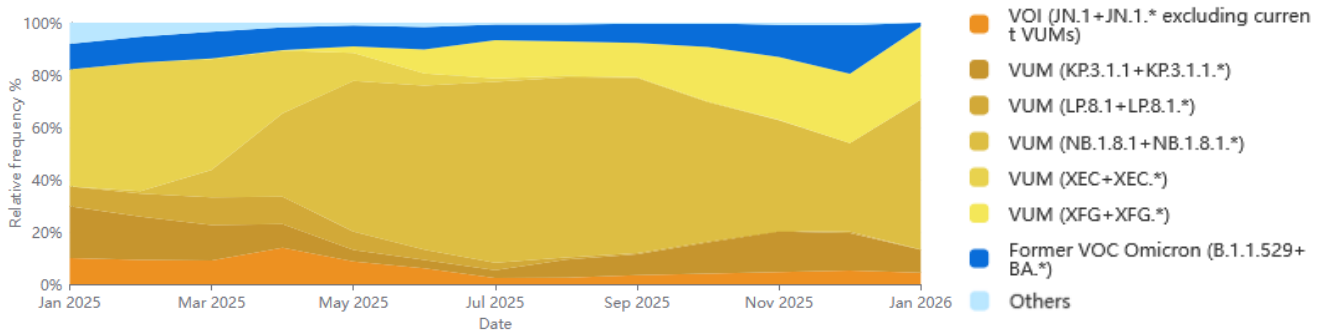


Figure 10: Relative frequency (%) of circulating variants in the Western Pacific Region, 2025-2026

Note: Indonesia data is not included in this figure. (Source: [GISAID hCoV-19 Variants Dashboard](#))

Table 1: Number of SARS-CoV-2 sequences submitted to GISAID from the Western Pacific Region*

Country and area	Total number of sequences submitted in quarter 3, 2025	Total number of sequences submitted in quarter 4, 2025	Total number of sequences submitted in quarter 1, 2026	Last submission
Australia	2 371	1 108	0	Dec-25
Brunei Darussalam	11	0	0	Sep-25
Cambodia	19	1	0	Oct-25
China	1 672	68	22	Jan-26
China, Hong Kong SAR	153	78	5	Jan-26
Guam	26	0	0	Aug-25
Indonesia	34	15	0	Nov-25
Japan	1 477	318	1	Jan-26
Lao PDR	22	0	0	Aug-25
Malaysia	213	9	0	Dec-25
Micronesia (Federated States of)	1	0	0	Jul-25
Mongolia	3	2	0	Oct-25
New Caledonia	6	0	0	Sep-25
New Zealand	864	244	29	Jan-26
Philippines	2	0	0	Jul-25
Republic of Korea	1 863	379	0	Dec-25
Singapore	1 006	164	16	Jan-26
Viet Nam	9	0	0	Aug-25
Wallis and Futuna	1	0	0	Jul-25

* All data presented are from: [GISAID SARS-COV-2 variants dashboard](#) (as of 27 January 2026)

Data Sources and Disclaimer

- Caution should be taken in interpreting this data as there may be changes in the number of sentinel sites reporting to the Pacific Syndromic Surveillance System.
- The information presented in this update is based on data provided by Ministries of Health and National Influenza Centers of Member States to Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS)'s online platform RespiMart ([Integrated influenza and other respiratory viruses surveillance output](#)) and open data that Ministries of Health published on its website or shared with the WHO Regional Officer for the Western Pacific.

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