Respiratory Viruses Surveillance Bulletin

Epidemiological Week 49 (Up to 7 December 2025)

World Health Organization
Western Pacific Region

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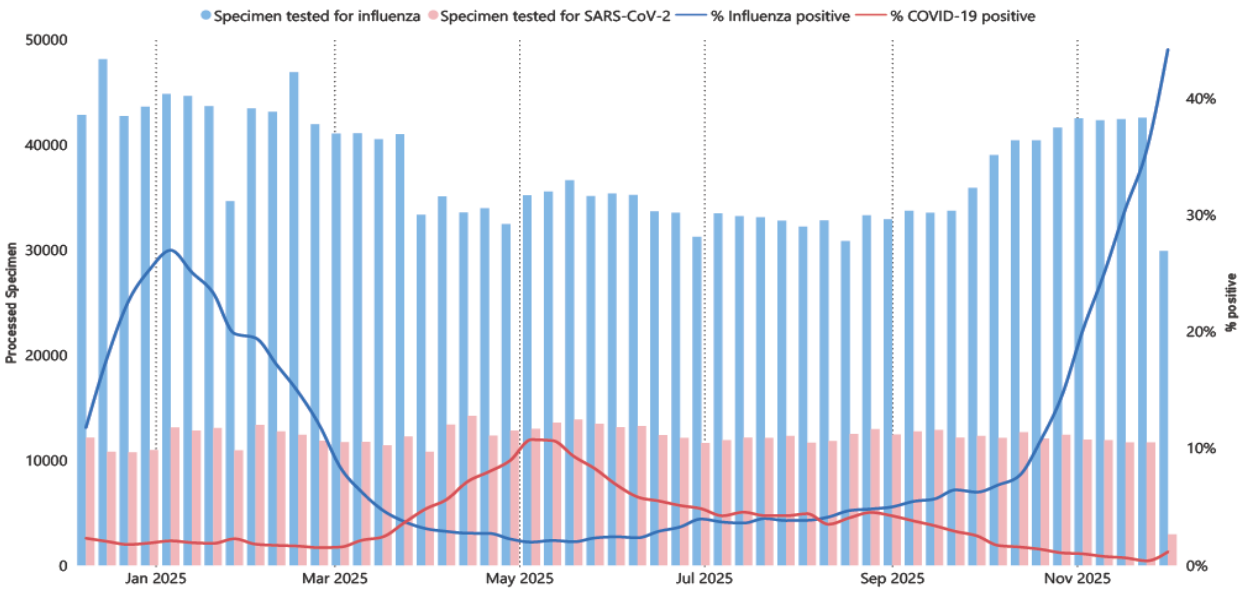
Feedback on WPRO Respiratory Viruses Surveillance Bulletin

Contents

Regional situation at a glance

- Influenza positivity has continued to increase in the region and reached 44% in week 49, whilst SARS-CoV-2 positivity continues to be below 5% (Figure 1). The predominant circulating influenza subtype remains influenza A(H3N2) (Figure 2).
- Influenza activity continues to be high in northern hemisphere countries: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Japan, Lao PDR, Mongolia and Viet Nam, but is declining in Malaysia, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, and Singapore.
- Unseasonal increases in influenza activity have been observed in some southern hemisphere countries; Fiji, Indonesia, New Caledonia, Tonga and Tuvalu (personal communication). Other Pacific Islands may have high levels of influenza positivity; however, only syndromic data for ILI are available.
- Media reports have indicated school clusters and elevated positivity rates in school age children in China and reductions in incidence in school age children has been noted in the Republic of Korea[1].
- On 10 December, the World Health Organization released a Disease Outbreak News[2] update on the global status of seasonal influenza. In summary:
    - Global activity remains within expected seasonal range for this time of year, early increases and higher activity than typical at this time of year have been observed in some countries.
    - A rapid increase across multiple countries has been observed, primarily driven by an emerging subclade of A(H3N2), identified as J.2.4.1 (designated subclade K). Current surveillance data show no evidence of increased severity of illness.
    - Vaccination remains vital, to prevent flu infections, reduce disease severity, hospitalizations and lowers the chance of complications and death, particularly for individuals at higher risk of influenza-related complications and those who care for them. Despite some genetic differences between circulating influenza strains and those included in the current vaccine formulations, seasonal influenza vaccines are still expected to provide protective benefits.



[1] Seoul Newspaper, Sina News
[2] Disease Outbreak News_Seasonal influenza-global situation

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 9 December 2024 to 7 December 2025 (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.
*As data submission for the most recent week has not been received from all countries the current trends should be interpreted with caution.

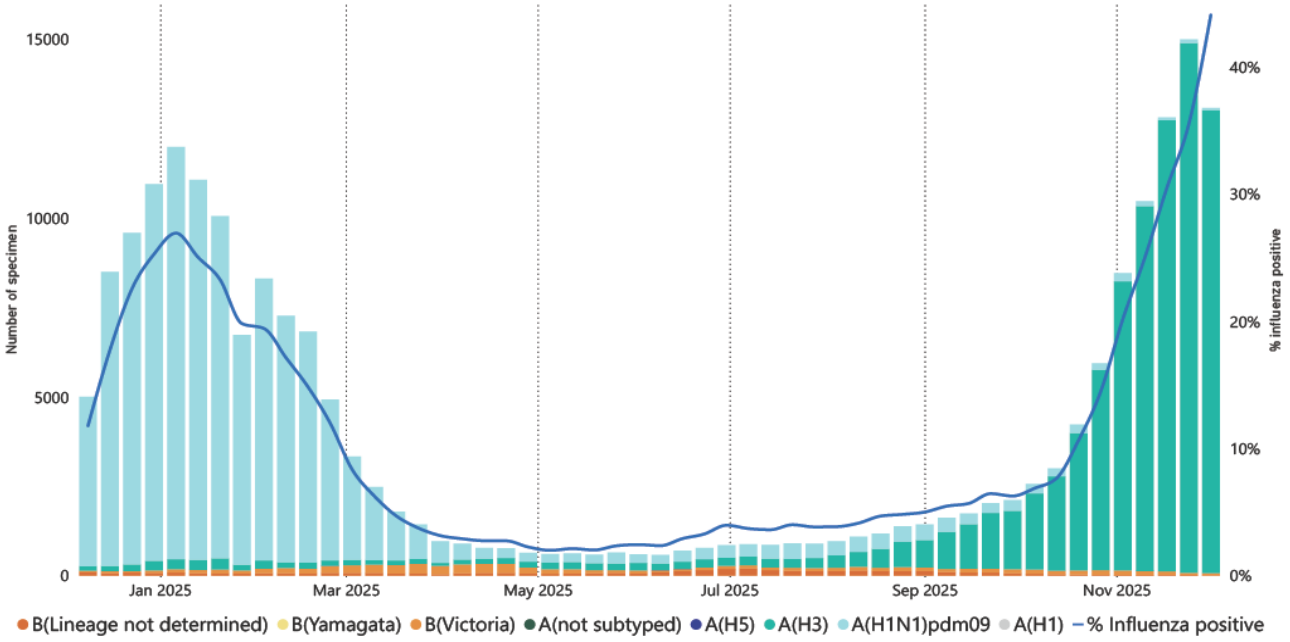


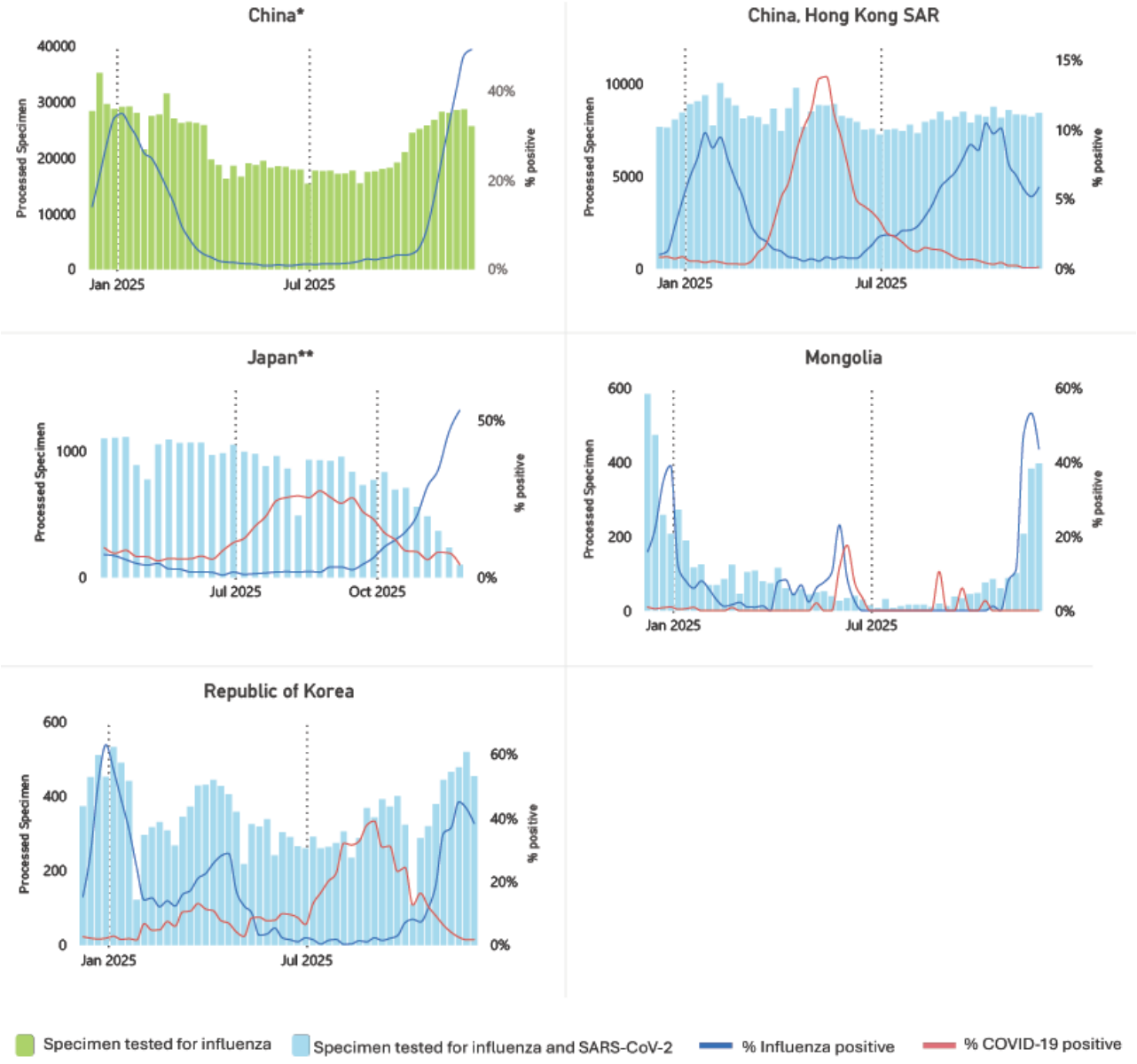
Figure 2. Influenza virus detections by subtype in the Western Pacific Region, 9 December 2024 to 7 December 2025 (Source: Influenza Laboratory Surveillance Information)

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 zone[3]. 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 are currently only reporting syndromic influenza like illness (ILI) data as virological testing has not been initiated.

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



[3] Influenza transmission zones

Figure 3: Number of specimens processed and % of specimens positive for influenza and SARS-CoV-2 by week, 9 December 2024 to 7 December 2025

** 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.*

Influenza activity is increasing in all countries in the Eastern Asia transmission zone (Figure 3), with the exception of Mongolia and Republic of Korea where a decrease was observed in the recent week. Positivity rates greater than 40% have been reported from China, Japan, Mongolia and Republic of Korea. In this transmission zone, influenza positivity ranged from around 6% (China, Hong Kong SAR) to 49% (China) in the most recent week. In China, a positive rate of 49% was observed, showing a light increase from last week's 48%. SARS-CoV-2 positivity continues to remain low for countries in the Eastern Asia transmission zone. The predominant circulating influenza subtype, consistent with the global picture, is influenza A(H3) in this transmission zone (Figure 4).

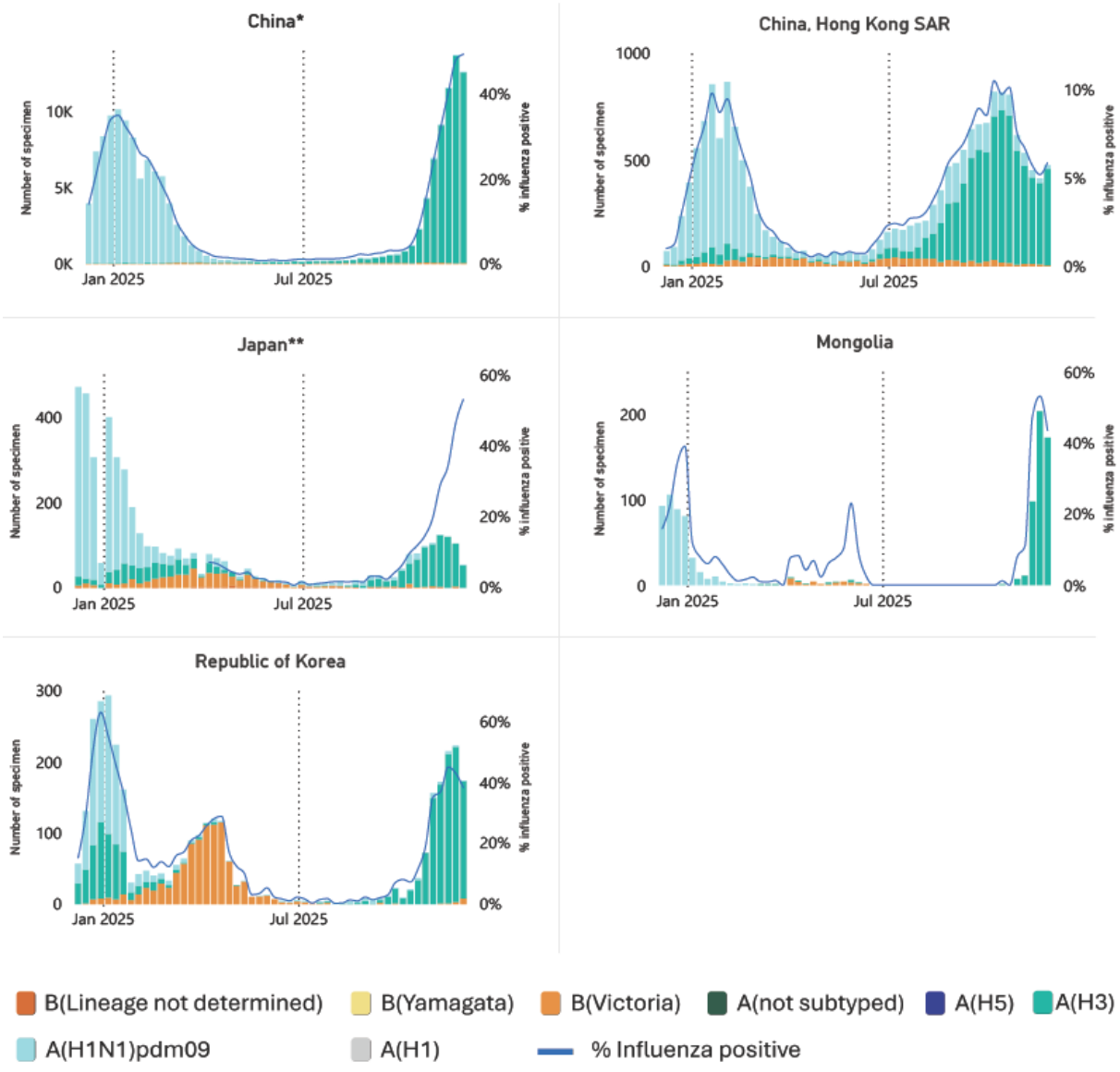


Figure 4: Influenza virus detections by subtype by week, 9 December 2024 to 7 December 2025

** 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 is mixed in the South-East Asia transmission zone. Positivity peaked between the fourth week of September and the fourth week of October reaching approximately 40% and is subsequently decreasing mainly in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore, while Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, and Lao PDR are showing an increasing trend in positivity compared with the last reporting period (Figure 5). SARS-CoV-2 positivity remains low (below 5%) in this transmission zone (Figure 5). The predominant circulating subtype is influenza A(H3) in this transmission zone although some countries including Cambodia and Lao PDR continue to detect influenza B(Victoria) (Figure 6).

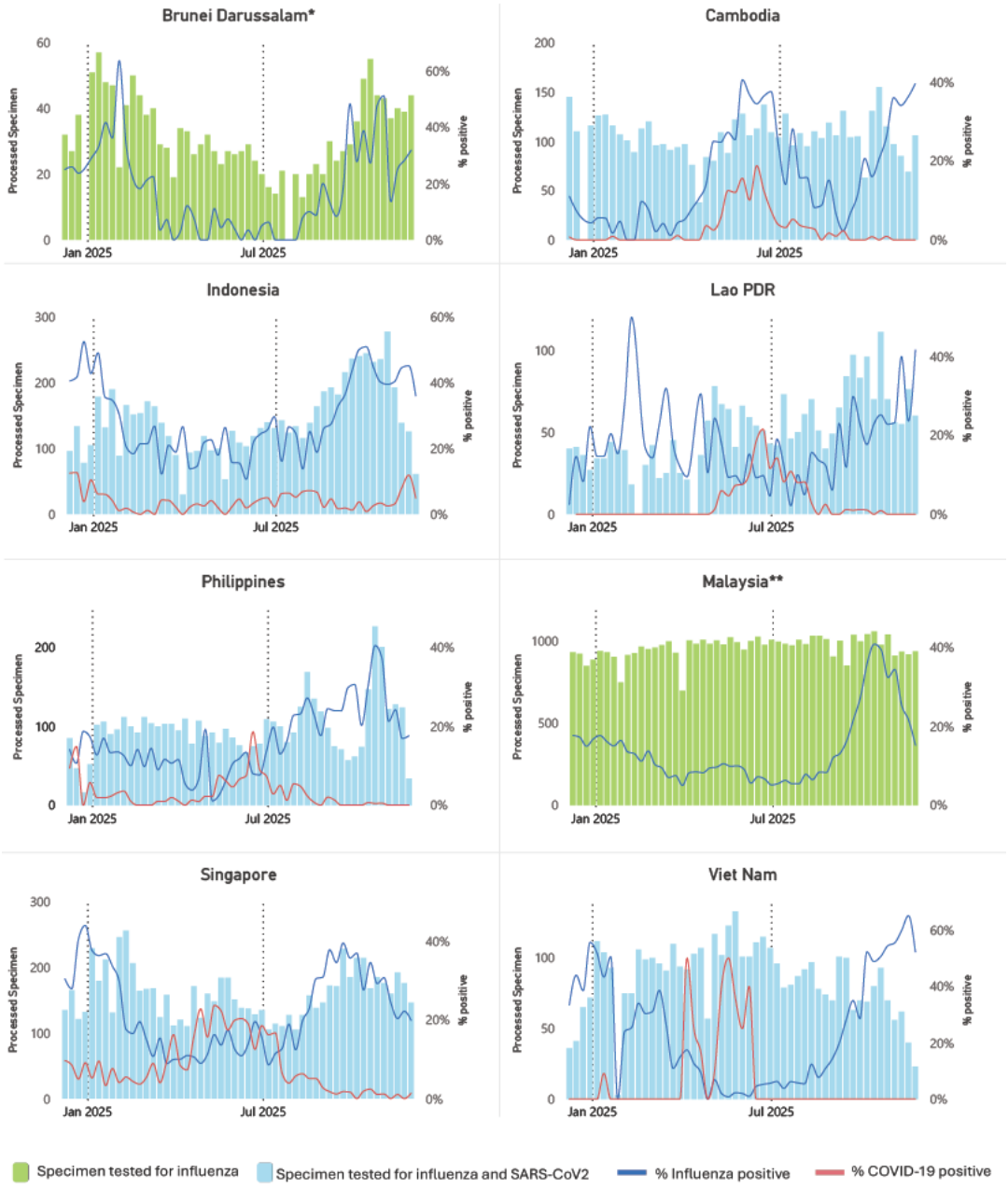


Figure 5: Number of specimens processed and % of specimens positive for influenza by week, 9 December 2024 to 7 December 2025

** Brunei Darussalam only tests sentinel specimens for influenza.*

*** Malaysia only tests sentinel specimens for influenza.*

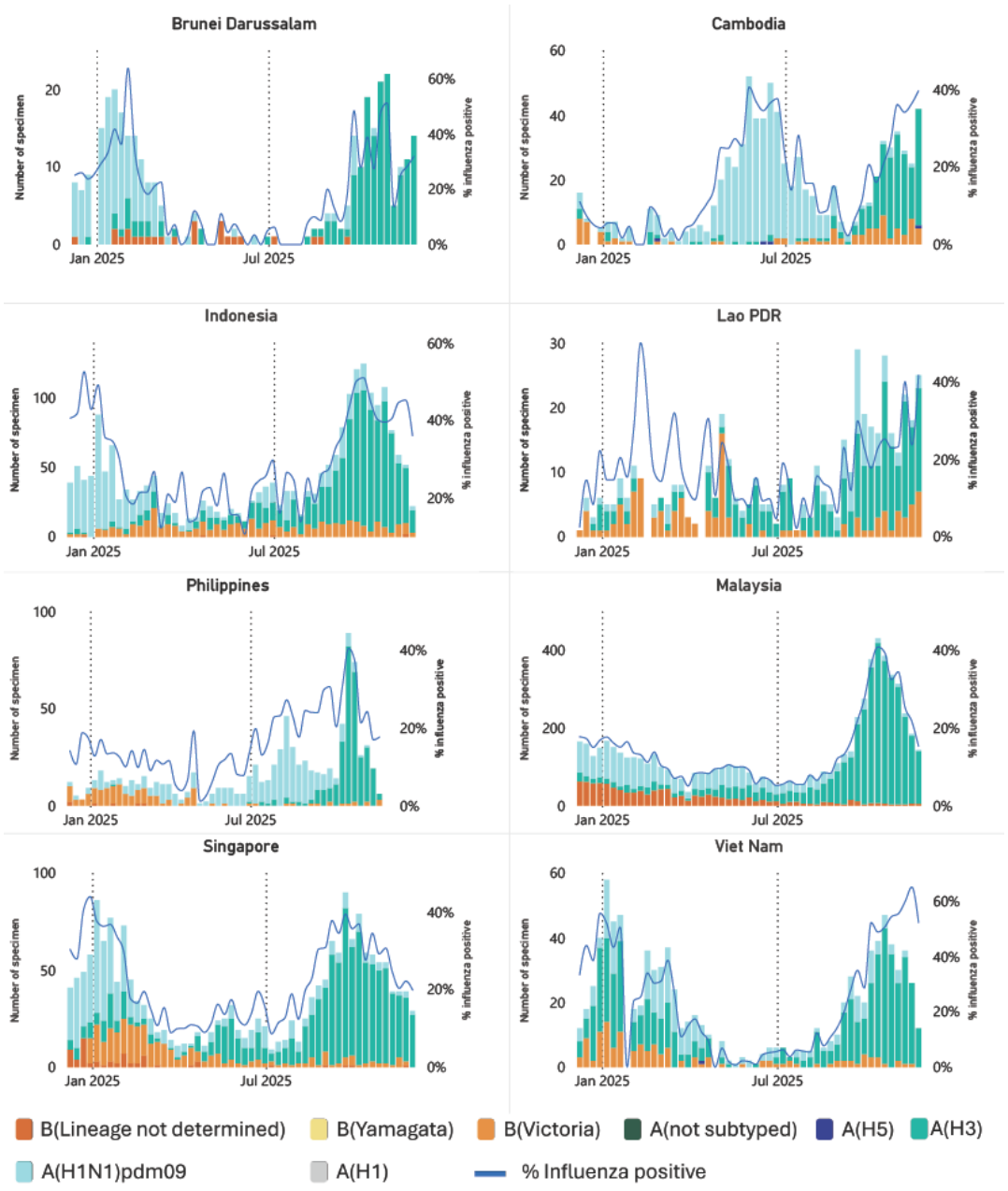


Figure 6: Influenza virus detections by subtype by week, 9 December 2024 to 7 December 2025

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

Influenza activity has declined in Australia since August, however in recent weeks there is a gradual increase in positivity, while activity in New Zealand has decreased from 23% in the last reporting period to 12% in the most recent week. In Fiji, influenza activity has rapidly increased over the past four weeks with 64% positivity reported in the past week (as of 9 November) (Figure 7). This pattern is unusual for this time of year, as Fiji's influenza season typically aligns with the Southern Hemisphere and the winter peak occurs between June to August. The predominant circulating influenza subtype is influenza A(H3) in this transmission zone (Figure 8).

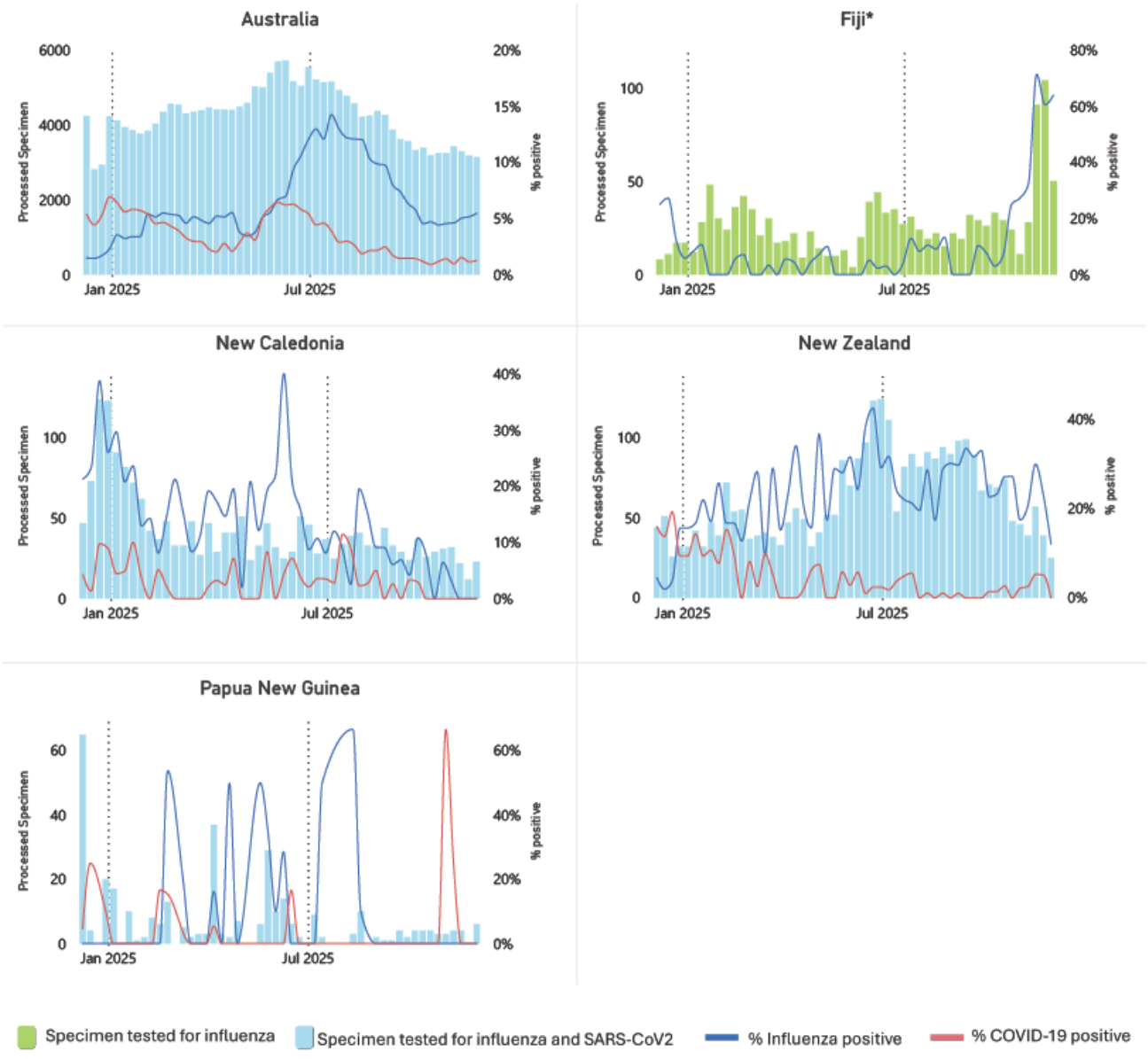


Figure 7: Number of specimens processed and % of specimens positive for influenza and SARS-CoV-2 by week, 9 December 2024 to 7 December 2025

** Fiji only tests sentinel specimens for influenza.*

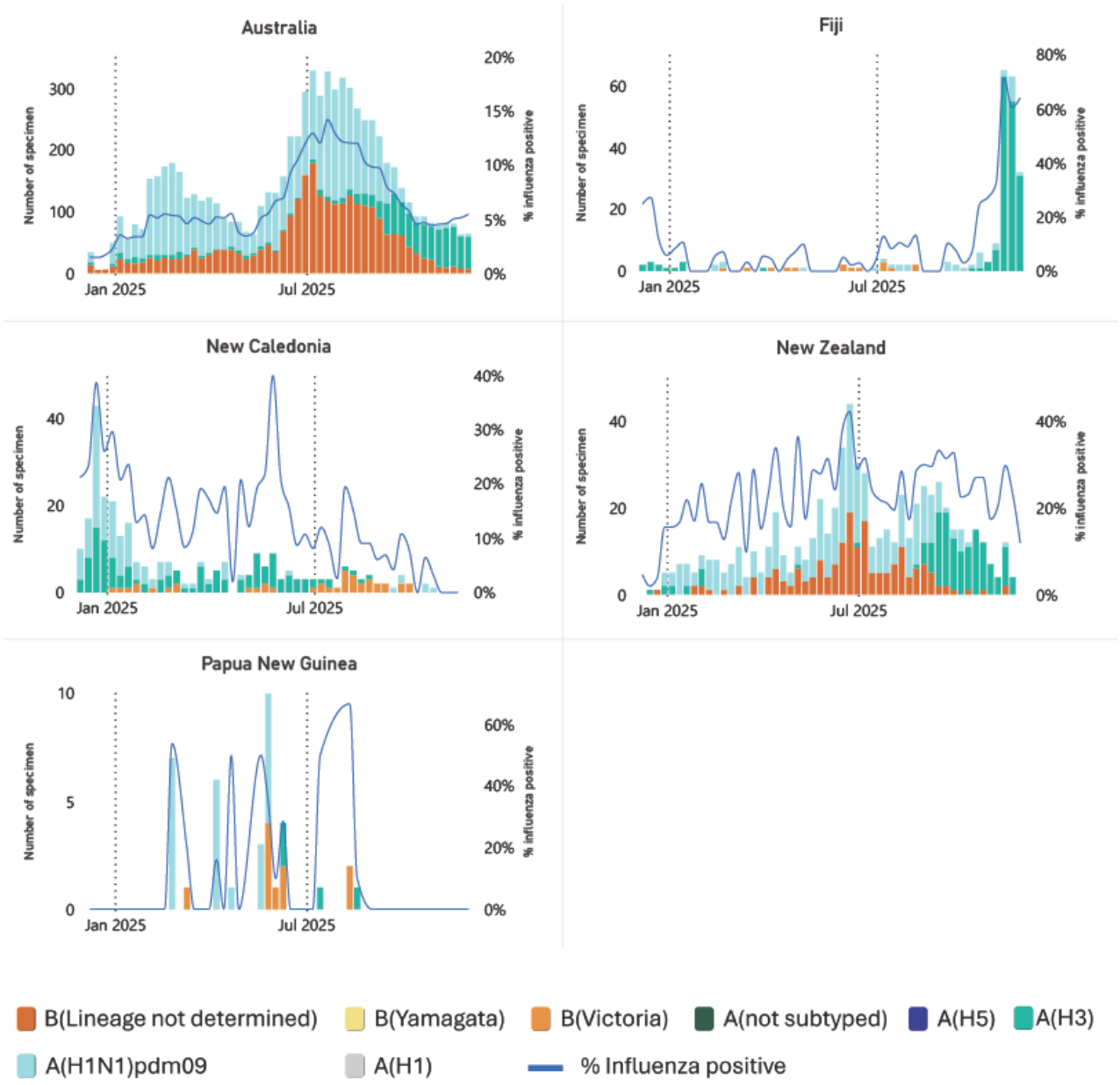


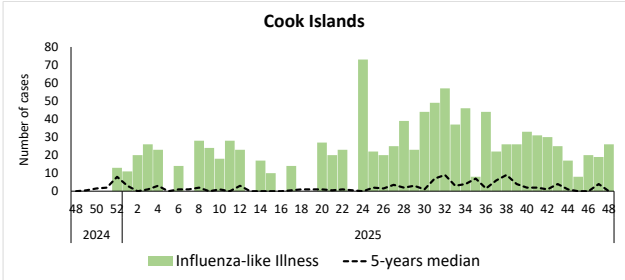
Figure 8: Influenza virus detections by subtype by week, 9 December 2024 to 7 December 2025

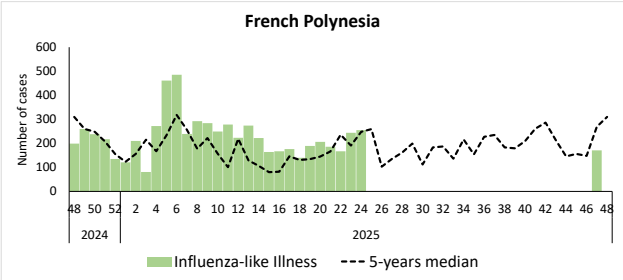
Influenza like illness (ILI) situation in the Pacific Island countries and areas (PICs)

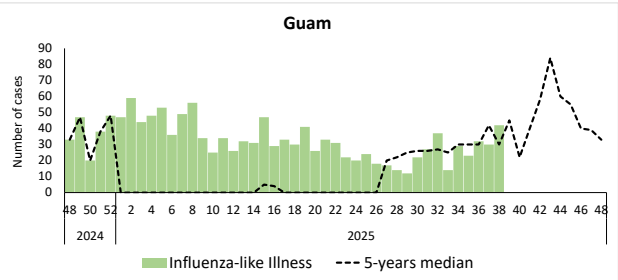
The Pacific Island countries and areas (PICs) collect data weekly for ILI and SARI through the Pacific Syndromic Surveillance System (PSSS) and report weekly ILI data to RespiMart. Data up to week 48 has been received from PSSS and is presented below. In week 48, 13 of the 21 PICs reported ILI surveillance data to RespiMart (Figure 9). No data is received from French Polynesia, Guam, Marshall Islands, Niue, Tokelau, and Vanuatu in week 48. American Samoa have not reported data in the past week and Pitcairn Islands have reported 0 ILI cases in the past 52 weeks.

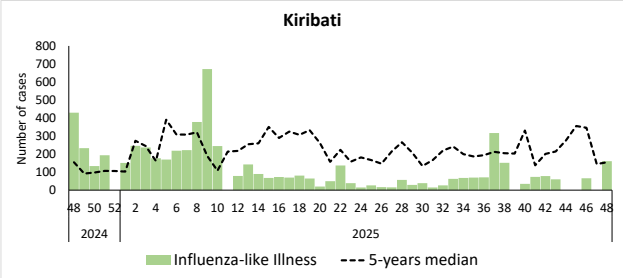
An increase in the ILI trend was observed in Cook Islands, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Federated States of Micronesia, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu compared to the previous week, during this reporting period.

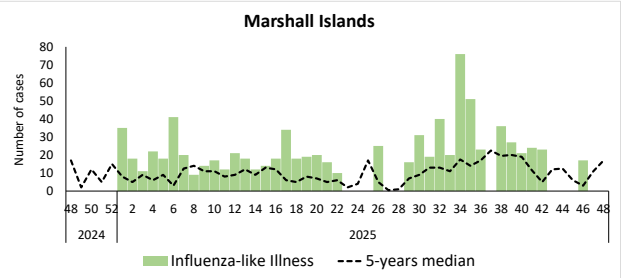
Figure 9: Reported cases of influenza-like illness from week 48, 2024 to week 48, 2025 (Source: Pacific Syndromic Surveillance System Weekly Bulletin)

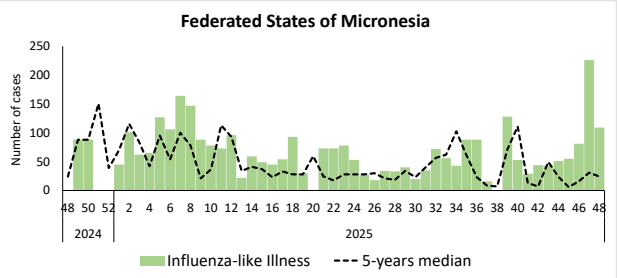

Cook Islands
Number of cases
2024
2025
Influenza-like Illness
5-years median

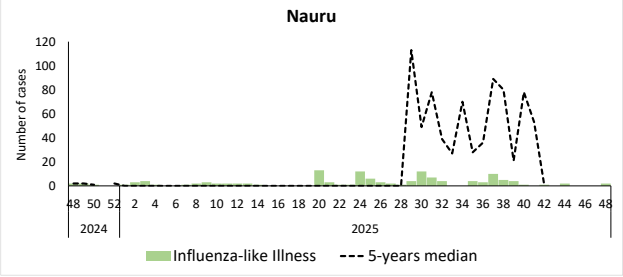

French Polynesia
Number of cases
2024
2025
Influenza-like Illness
5-years median

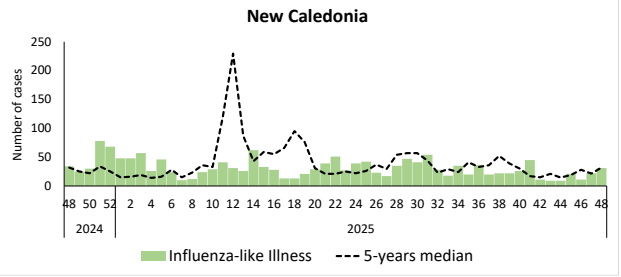

Guam
Number of cases
2024
2025
Influenza-like Illness
5-years median

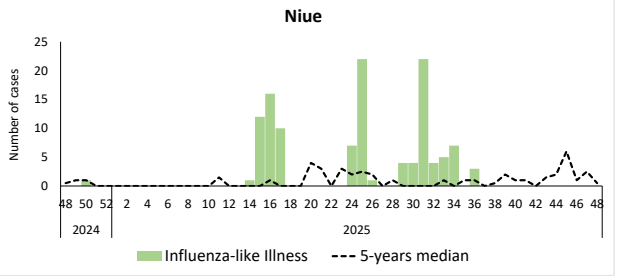

Kiribati
Number of cases
2024
2025
Influenza-like Illness
5-years median

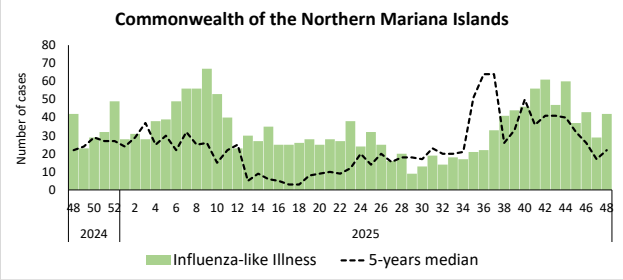

Marshall Islands
Number of cases
2024
2025
Influenza-like Illness
5-years median

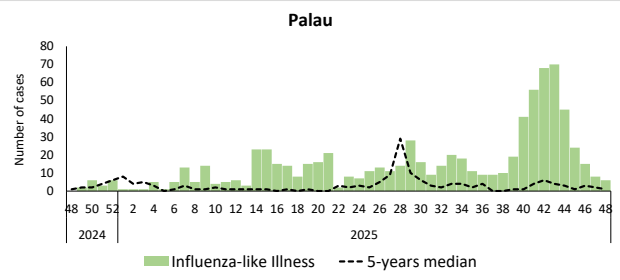

Federated States of Micronesia
Number of cases
2024
2025
Influenza-like Illness
5-years median

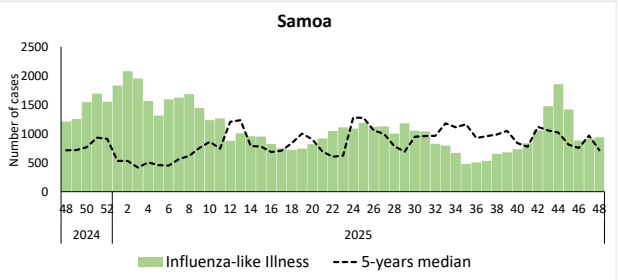

Nauru
Number of cases
2024
2025
Influenza-like Illness
5-years median

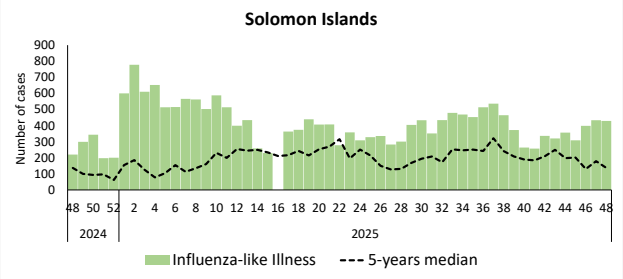

New Caledonia
Number of cases
2024
2025
Influenza-like Illness
5-years median

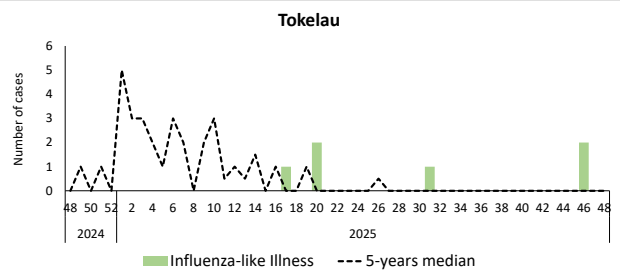

Niue
Number of cases
2024
2025
Influenza-like Illness
5-years median

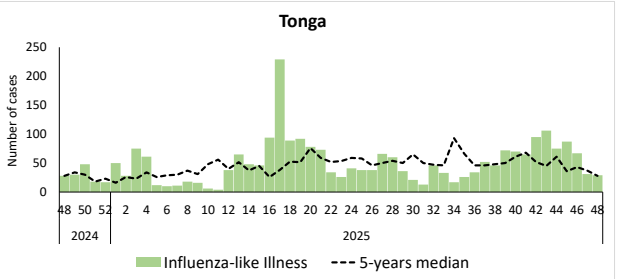

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Number of cases
2024
2025
Influenza-like Illness
5-years median

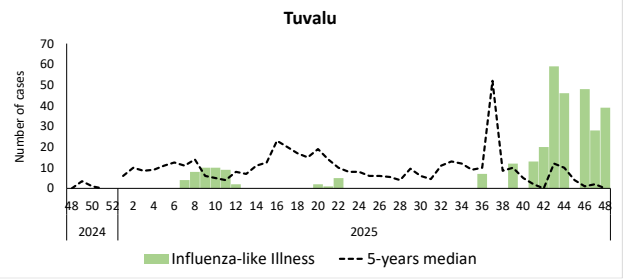

Palau
Number of cases
2024
2025
Influenza-like Illness
5-years median

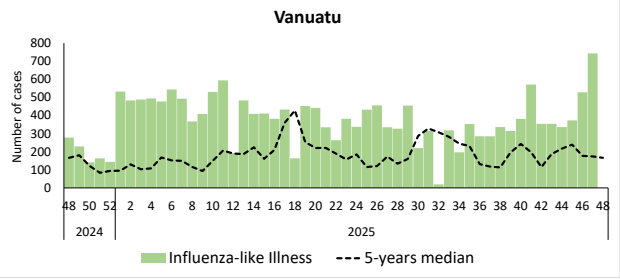

Samoa
Number of cases
2024
2025
Influenza-like Illness
5-years median

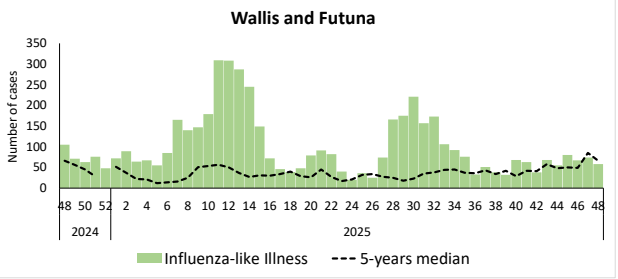

Solomon Islands
Number of cases
2024
2025
Influenza-like Illness
5-years median


Tokelau
Number of cases
2024
2025
Influenza-like Illness
5-years median


Tonga
Number of cases
2024
2025
Influenza-like Illness
5-years median


Tuvalu
Number of cases
2024
2025
Influenza-like Illness
5-years median


Vanuatu
Number of cases
2024
2025
Influenza-like Illness
5-years median


Wallis and Futuna
Number of cases
2024
2025
Influenza-like Illness
5-years median

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

As of 16 December 2025, 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 30%, B.1.1.529 at 30%, KP.3.1.1 at 10% and remaining variants collectively at 30% (Figure 10). All circulating variants are derived from Omicron. Contribution of SARS-CoV-2 sequences to GISAID for regional analysis are indicated in Table 1.

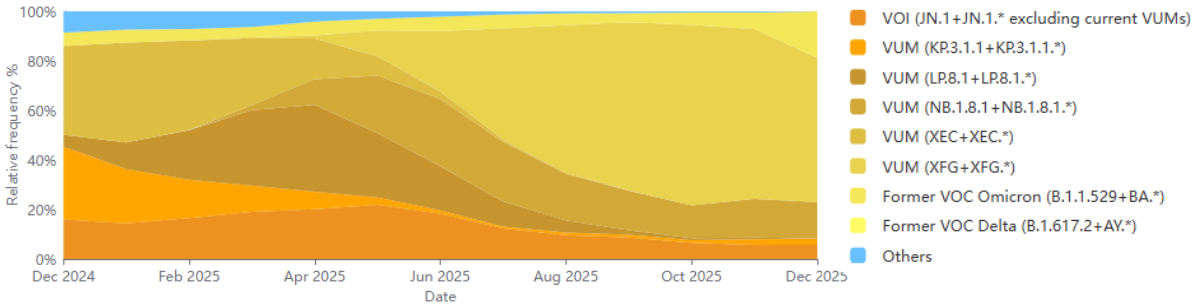


Figure 10: Relative frequency (%) of circulating variants in the Western Pacific Region, 2024-2025
Note: Indonesia data is not included in this figure. (Source: GISAID hCoV-19 Variants Dashboard)

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	Last submission
Australia	2 370	827	Dec-25
Brunei Darussalam	11	0	Sep-25
Cambodia	18	0	Sep-25
China	1 668	58	Nov-25
China, Hong Kong SAR	153	66	Nov-25
Guam	26	0	Aug-25
Indonesia	30	0	Sep-25
Japan	1 264	178	Nov-25
Lao PDR	22	0	Aug-25
Malaysia	209	6	Oct-25
Micronesia (Federation of)	1	0	Jul-25
Mongolia	3	2	Oct-25
New Caledonia	6	0	Sep-25
New Zealand	852	170	Nov-25
Philippines	2	0	Jul-25
Republic of Korea	1 844	311	Nov-25
Singapore	1 006	121	Dec-25

** All data presented are from: GSAID SARS-COV-2 variants dashboard (as of 16 December 2025)*

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.

Reference links:

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17. Decision 3985/QD-BYT 2023 guiding COVID19 surveillance and prevention (thuvienphapluat.vn)
18. Circular 54/2015/TT-BYT on the regime of information on reporting and declaration of the latest infectious diseases (thuvienphapluat.vn)