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 23 of 2023 are presented in Table 1 below. Influenza A and B are co-circulating, however, the majority of cases reported to week 23 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 23, 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 (23 of 2023)</td>
<td>90,801</td>
<td>2,210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia (22 of 2023)</td>
<td>1,789</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China (23 of 2023)</td>
<td>564,432</td>
<td>118,329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji (20 of 2023)</td>
<td>1,914</td>
<td>461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan (22 of 2023)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao People’s Democratic Republic (23 of 2023)</td>
<td>2,383</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia (23 of 2023)</td>
<td>19,709</td>
<td>3,703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolia (21 of 2023)</td>
<td>9,542</td>
<td>1,527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Caledonia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand (23 of 2023)</td>
<td>1,117</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Philippines (23 of 2023)</td>
<td>2,200</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Korea (23 of 2023)</td>
<td>6,679</td>
<td>671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore (23 of 2023)</td>
<td>6,300</td>
<td>1,291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viet Nam (17 of 2023)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: Number of specimens positive for influenza by subtype, Western Pacific Region, week 23, 2022 to week 23, 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 23 of 2023, sentinel hospitals in the northern provinces reported ILI% of 3.7%, lower than the last week (3.9%), and higher than the same week of 2020-2022 (2.0%, 3.1%, and 1.6%) (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 23 of 2023, the ILI activity in Mongolia decreased to 26 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 23 of 2023, the overall weekly influenza-like illness (ILI) rate was 18.1 per 1,000 outpatient visits, which was lower than the rate recorded in the previous week (21.5) (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 22 of 2023, the number of cases reported weekly by sentinel hospital sites remained low in Japan. The number of cases in 2023 is 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 a decreasing trend in the overall seasonal influenza activity. In week 23, the average consultation rate for influenza-like illness (ILI) among sentinel general outpatient clinics (GOPC) was 1.9 ILI cases per 1,000 consultations, which was slightly lower than 2.0 recorded in the previous week (Figure 6). The average consultation rate for ILI among sentinel private medical practitioner (PMP) clinics was 27.7 ILI cases per 1,000 consultations, which was lower than 45.8 recorded in the previous week (Figure 7).

![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)

China (South) - ILI Surveillance

During week 23, the percentage of outpatient or emergency visits for ILI (ILI%) at national sentinel hospitals in southern provinces was 5.8%, lower than the last week (6.3%), higher than the same week of 2020 and 2021 (3.0% and 4.3%) and the same as the same week of 2022 (5.8%) (Figure 8).

![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 23 of 2023, the average daily number of patients seeking treatment in the polyclinics for ARI is 1,913 (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=1,138) in the community was 15.8% in the past 4 weeks. Of the 241 specimens tested positive for influenza in May 2023, 162 were positive for Influenza A(H3N2) (67%), 56 were positive for Influenza A(pH1N1) (23%), and 23 were positive for Influenza B (10%) (**Figure 10**).

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**Lao PDR**

During week 23 of 2023, the National Center for Laboratory and Epidemiology received data from all seven sentinel sites in Lao PDR. The number of influenza-like illness cases presenting at sentinel sites was 44 cases higher than the previous week. There were 55 samples tested for influenza in week 23, 2023. Influenza A/pdmH1N1 was identified (n=7) (**Figure 11**).
Cambodia
In week 22 of 2023, the Ministry of Health received data from 11 sentinel sites in Cambodia. During this period, the number of ILI cases in Cambodia remained steady between week 21 (194 cases) and week 22 (193 cases) of 2023. Of the 15 samples collected, 4 (26.7%) samples were positive for influenza A/H1N1pdm (Figure 12). The proportion of weekly influenza positive samples fluctuated in 2023.

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 11 June 2023, there have been 85,986 notifications of laboratory-confirmed influenza reported to the National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System in Australia. There were 27,540 laboratory-confirmed influenza notifications with a diagnosis date this fortnight (Monday 29 May to Sunday 11 June 2023), compared to 17,875 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, and higher than observed in the same period in 2019 (Figure 13).
New Zealand – ILI Surveillance
In the week ending on 11 June 2023, the influenza-like illness (ILI) general practitioner consultation rates decreased compared to the previous week (10.6 per 1,000 compared to 12.3 per 1,000) *(Figure 14).* The rate is lower to that observed at this time in 2022 and the 2015-2019 average. County Manukau continues to record the highest rate of general practitioner ILI consultations, which is above the national rate and higher than usual for this time of year. Rates in MidCentral, Hawke’s Bay and Lakes also remain above the national rate. Influenza B and A(H1N1) are the viruses most commonly detected in community surveillance in recent weeks.

Pacific Island Countries and Areas (PICs) - ILI Surveillance
In week 23 of 2023, 18 out of 21 PICs reported ILI surveillance data. 15 out of 18 PICs reported updated data. No reports are available for American Samoa, Guam, and Nauru, and no updates from Federated States of Micronesia, Tokelau and Tuvalu. The following countries reported increased influenza-like illness activity in week 23 compared to the previous week: Fiji, Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tonga. *(Figure 15).*
In Palau, as of 19 June 2023, the Ministry of Health and Human Services reported a steep increase in influenza observed at the Belau National Hospital. Laboratory testing confirmed influenza B virus in 44 patients since 28 May. Most of the cases are children and adolescents aged 15 years and below. (Sources: PACNET on 20 June 2023 and Palau Ministry of Health & Human Services).
Influenza Situation Update

21 June 2023

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]