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 27 of 2023 are presented in Table 1 below. Influenza A and B are co-circulating, however, the majority of cases reported to week 27 of 2023 have been Influenza A (Figure 1). Caution should be taken when interpreting these data as there are reporting delays.

<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 (27 of 2023)</td>
<td>114,004</td>
<td>4,288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia (27 of 2023)</td>
<td>2,376</td>
<td>313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China (27 of 2023)</td>
<td>678,007</td>
<td>119,039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji (24 of 2023)</td>
<td>2,252</td>
<td>463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan (26 of 2023)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2,767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao People’s Democratic Republic (27 of 2023)</td>
<td>3,020</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia (27 of 2023)</td>
<td>23,354</td>
<td>4,271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolia (25 of 2023)</td>
<td>10,092</td>
<td>1,532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Caledonia</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand (27 of 2023)</td>
<td>1,444</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines (27 of 2023)</td>
<td>2,691</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Korea (27 of 2023)</td>
<td>7,803</td>
<td>745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore (27 of 2023)</td>
<td>7,146</td>
<td>1,473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viet Nam (20 of 2023)</td>
<td>597</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 27 of 2023, sentinel hospitals in the northern provinces reported ILI% of 2.9%, lower than the last week (3.1%), and higher than the same week of 2020-2022 (2.0%, 2.5%, and 1.9%) (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 26 of 2023, the ILI activity in Mongolia decreased to 8 ILI cases per 10,000 population. This is below 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 27 of 2023, the overall weekly influenza-like illness (ILI) rate was 16.3 per 1,000 outpatient visits, which was similar to the rate recorded in the previous week (16.1) (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 26 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).

![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 an increase in the overall seasonal influenza activity. In week 27, the average consultation rate for influenza-like illness (ILI) among sentinel general outpatient clinics (GOPC) was 2.6 ILI cases per 1,000 consultations, which was higher than 2.1 recorded in the previous week (Figure 6). The average consultation rate for ILI among sentinel private medical practitioner (PMP) clinics was 33.4 ILI cases per 1,000 consultations, which was slightly higher than 32.3 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 medical practitioner clinics, Hong Kong SAR 2019-2023](source: Hong Kong Centre for Health Protection)

**China (South) - ILI Surveillance**

During week 27, the percentage of outpatient or emergency visits for ILI (ILI%) at national sentinel hospitals in southern provinces was 4.7%, lower than the last week (5.0%), higher than the same week of 2020 and 2021 (2.8% and 3.7%) and the lower than the same week of 2022 (5.5%) (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 27 of 2023, the average daily number of patients seeking treatment in the polyclinics for ARI is 2,211 (over 5.5 working days) (Figure 9). The proportion of patients with influenza-like illness (ILI) among the polyclinic attendances for ARI is 0.3%. The overall positivity rate for influenza among ILI samples (n= 846) in the community was 21.5% in the past 4 weeks. Of the 176 specimens tested positive for influenza in Jun 2023, 103 were positive for Influenza A(H3N2) (58.5%), 60 were positive for Influenza A(pH1N1) (34.1%), and 12 were positive for Influenza B (6.8%) (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 27 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 33 cases higher than the previous week. There were 100 samples tested for influenza in week 27, 2023. Influenza A/pdmH1N1 was identified (n=3) (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 26 of 2023, the Ministry of Health received data from 7 sentinel sites in Cambodia. During this period, the number of ILI cases in Cambodia decreased slightly between week 25 (175 cases) and week 26 (165 cases) of 2023. Of the 13 samples collected, 6 (46.2%) samples were positive for influenza A/H1N1pdm (Figure 12). The proportion of weekly influenza positive samples fluctuated in 2023.

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-date (1 January to 9 July 2023), there have been 149,989 notifications of laboratory-confirmed influenza reported to the National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System in Australia. There were 32,132 laboratory-confirmed influenza notifications with a diagnosis date this fortnight (Monday 26 June to Sunday 9 July 2023), compared to 30,255 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 2 July 2023, the influenza-like illness (ILI) general practitioner consultation rates increased compared to the previous week (18.35 per 100,000 compared to 17.6 per 100,000) (Figure 14). The national rate is lower than that observed at this time in 2022 and the 2015-2019 period. County Lakes recorded 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 Manukau and MidCentral also remain above the national rate. Influenza B and A(H1N1) are the viruses most commonly detected in community surveillance in recent weeks.

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)

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

There have been no updates since the previous report. In week 25 of 2023, 18 out of 21 PICs reported ILI surveillance data. 16 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 and Tuvalu. The following countries reported increased influenza-like illness activity in week 25 compared to the previous week: Republic of the Marshall Islands, Fiji and Vanuatu. (Figure 15).
Influenza Situation Update

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 2023-2024 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]

*Caution should be taken in interpreting these data as there may be changes in the number of sentinel sites reporting to the Pacific Syndromic Surveillance System.

** FSM: Federated States of Micronesia, CMNI: Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands

Figure 15: Reported cases of influenza-like illness in Pacific Island Countries, 2019-2023
(Source: Pacific Syndromic Surveillance System Weekly Bulletin)