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 35 of 2023 are presented in Table 1 below. Influenza A and B are co-circulating, however, the majority of cases reported to week 35 of 2023 have been Influenza A (Figure 1). Caution should be taken when interpreting this data as there are reporting delays.

Table 1: Cumulative data reported to FluNet from Western Pacific Region, week 1 to week 35, 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 (35 of 2023)</td>
<td>192503</td>
<td>12688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia (35 of 2023)</td>
<td>3440</td>
<td>423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China (35 of 2023)</td>
<td>910767</td>
<td>124974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji (24 of 2023)</td>
<td>2252</td>
<td>463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan (34 of 2023)</td>
<td>4431</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao People’s Democratic Republic (35 of 2023)</td>
<td>30653</td>
<td>5831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia (35 of 2023)</td>
<td>10585</td>
<td>1532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolia (33 of 2023)</td>
<td>10136</td>
<td>887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Caledonia</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand (35 of 2023)</td>
<td>2117</td>
<td>490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines (33 of 2023)</td>
<td>3320</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Korea (35 of 2023)</td>
<td>881</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: Number of specimens positive for influenza by subtype, Western Pacific Region, week 35, 2022 to week 35, 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 $\geq 38^\circ C$ 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 $\geq 38^\circ C$ 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 35 of 2023, sentinel hospitals in the northern provinces reported ILI% of 2.8% was similar compared to higher than the last week (2.7%), and higher than the same week of 2020-2022 (1.8%, 1.7%, and 2.5%) (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 34 of 2023, the ILI activity in Mongolia increased to 16 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 34 of 2023, the overall weekly influenza-like illness (ILI) rate was 10.6 per 1,000 outpatient visits, which was lower than the rate recorded in the previous weeks (12.0 on week 33 and 12.5 on week 32) (Figure 4).

![Figure 4](image)

**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 34 of 2023, the number of cases reported weekly by sentinel hospital sites remained low in Japan. The number of cases in 2023 has been consistently low (Figure 5).

![Figure 5](image)

**Figure 5:** Number of influenza cases reported weekly per reporting sentinel hospital site, Japan 2013-2023

(Source: Japan National Institute of Infectious Diseases)
Influenza Situation Update

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 35, the average consultation rate for influenza-like illness (ILI) among sentinel general outpatient clinics (GOPC) was 7.4 ILI cases per 1,000 consultations, which was higher than 5.6 recorded in the previous week (Figure 6). The average consultation rate for ILI among sentinel private medical practitioner (PMP) clinics was 42.1 ILI cases per 1,000 consultations, which was lower than 56.5 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 35, the percentage of outpatient or emergency visits for ILI (ILI%) at national sentinel hospitals in southern provinces was 3.9%, similar compared to lower than the last week (4.0%), and higher than the same week in 2020-2022 (2.7%, 2.7% and 2.9%) (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 35 of 2023, the average daily number of patients seeking treatment in the polyclinics for ARI is 2,426 (over 4.5 working days) *(Figure 9)*. The proportion of patients with influenza-like illness (ILI) among the polyclinic attendances for ARI is 0.4%. The overall positivity rate for influenza among ILI samples (n= 1,106) in the community was 26.1% in the past 4 weeks. Of the 351 specimens tested positive for influenza in August 2023, 241 were positive for Influenza A(H3N2) (69%), 87 were positive for Influenza A(pH1N1) (25%), and 23 were positive for Influenza B (6%) *(Figure 10)*.

**Lao PDR**

During week 35 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 16 cases higher than the previous week. There were 105 samples tested for influenza in week 35, 2023. Influenza A/pdmH1N1 (n=4) and Flu A/H3 (n=1) were identified. *(Figure 11).*

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*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*

*Figure 11: Weekly number of ILI cases at sentinel sites (2019 to 2023)*  
(Source: Lao National Center for Laboratory and Epidemiology)
Cambodia

In week 35 of 2023, the Ministry of Health received data from 7 sentinel sites in Cambodia. During this period, the number of ILI cases in Cambodia increased slightly in week 35 compared to week 34 (162 cases), and the positivity rate for week 35 is 0% (Figure 12). The proportion of weekly influenza positive samples fluctuated in 2023.

![Figure 12: Number of ILI samples from 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-date (1 January to 3 September 2023), there have been 224,873 notifications of laboratory-confirmed influenza reported to the National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System in Australia. There were 12,082 laboratory-confirmed influenza notifications with a diagnosis date this fortnight (Monday 21 August to Sunday 3 September 2023), compared to 14,535 notifications in the previous fortnight. From March 2023, the number of notifications of laboratory-confirmed influenza had gradually increased, but it has significantly decreased after the peak in July. The number of notifications year-to-date is lower than the 5-year average. (Figure 13).

![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 – ILI Surveillance**

In the week ending on 3 September 2023, weekly general practitioner ILI consultation rates decreased slightly compared to the previous week (32.88 per 100,000 compared to 33.09 per 100,000) (Figure 14). The national rate is higher than that observed at this time in 2022 but lower than the 2015-2019 period. Influenza B and A(H1N1) continue to be the most detected viruses in the community in recent weeks.

![Graph showing ILI rates in New Zealand](image)

**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 36 of 2023, 18 out of 21 PICs reported ILI surveillance data. Most PICs reported updated data since week 35. No reports are available for American Samoa, Guam, and Nauru. The following countries reported increased influenza-like illness activity in week 33-36 compared to the previous weeks: Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, Fiji and French Polynesia. (Figure 15).

![Graph showing ILI trends in Cook Islands and Fiji](image)
Influenza Situation Update

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)

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 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]