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 41 of 2023 are presented in Table 1 below. Influenza A and B are co-circulating, however, the majority of cases reported to week 41 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 41, 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 (41 of 2023)</td>
<td>219375</td>
<td>13805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia (38 of 2023)</td>
<td>3857</td>
<td>445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China (41 of 2023)</td>
<td>1123797</td>
<td>135957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji (36 of 2023)</td>
<td>2821</td>
<td>470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan (41 of 2023)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao People’s Democratic Republic (41 of 2023)</td>
<td>5698</td>
<td>462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia (40 of 2023)</td>
<td>40233</td>
<td>6939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolia (37 of 2023)</td>
<td>10750</td>
<td>1532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Caledonia</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand (40 of 2023)</td>
<td>2546</td>
<td>582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines (40 of 2023)</td>
<td>4465</td>
<td>432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Korea (41 of 2023)</td>
<td>11759</td>
<td>1086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore (41 of 2023)</td>
<td>11258</td>
<td>2460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viet Nam (40 of 2023)</td>
<td>1219</td>
<td>297</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 41 of 2023, sentinel hospitals in the northern provinces reported ILI% of 2.9%, which is lower than the last week (3.2%), and higher than the same week of 2020-2022 (2.4%, 2.0%, and 2.6%) (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 41 of 2023, the ILI activity in Mongolia increased to 46 ILI cases per 10,000 population. This is above the upper tolerance limit, and an increasing trend has continued since week 30 (Figure 3).

![Figure 3: Proportion of outpatient ILI visits per 10,000 people in Mongolia, 2021-2023](source: Mongolia National Influenza Center)
**Republic of Korea**

In week 41 of 2023, the overall weekly influenza-like illness (ILI) rate was 15.5 per 1,000 outpatient visits, which was higher than the rate recorded in the previous weeks (14.6 on week 40). This is above the 2023-2024 epidemic threshold (Figure 4).

![Figure 4: Weekly ILL incidence rate per 1,000 outpatient consultations, Republic of Korea, 2019-2023](Source: Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency)

**Sentinel influenza surveillance**

**Japan**

In week 40 of 2023, the weekly number of cases reported by sentinel hospital sites in Japan was similar to the cases recorded in the previous week. The overall trend in the number of cases, however, has increased since week 34 (Figure 5).

![Figure 5: Weekly number of influenza cases reported 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 decrease in the overall seasonal influenza activity. In week 41, the average consultation rate for influenza-like illness (ILI) among sentinel general outpatient clinics (GOPC) was 7.6 ILI cases per 1,000 consultations, which was lower than 10.6 recorded in the previous week (Figure 6). The average consultation rate for ILI among sentinel private medical practitioner (PMP) clinics was 40.1 ILI cases per 1,000 consultations, which was lower than 42.5 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 41, 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 (5.2%), and higher than the same week in 2020-2022 (3.3%, 2.8% 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 41 of 2023, the average daily number of patients seeking treatment in the polyclinics for ARI is 2,508 (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= 1,324) in the community was 18.5% in the past 4 weeks. Of the 294 specimens tested positive for influenza in September 2023, 191 were positive for Influenza A(H3N2) (65%), 72 were positive for Influenza A(pH1N1) (24%), and 31 were positive for Influenza B (11%) *(Figure 10)*.

![Figure 9: Average daily polyclinic attendances for ARI in Singapore, 2022-2023](Source: Singapore Ministry of Health)

**Lao PDR**

During week 41 of 2023, the National Center for Laboratory and Epidemiology received data from all sentinel sites in Lao PDR. The number of ILI cases presenting at sentinel sites was 47 cases higher than the previous week. There were 156 samples tested for influenza in week 41. Influenza A/pdmH1N1 (n=20), Influenza A/H3 (n=5), and Influenza B-Victoria (n=5) were identified. *(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 41 of 2023, the Ministry of Health received data from all seven sentinel sites in Cambodia. The number of ILI cases in Cambodia slightly decreased in week 41 (151 cases) compared to week 40 (163 cases). The positivity rate for week 41 was 25.0% (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 15 October 2023), there have been 251,095 notifications of laboratory-confirmed influenza reported to the National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System in Australia. There were 6,037 laboratory-confirmed influenza notifications with a diagnosis date this fortnight (2 October to 15 October 2023), compared to 7,725 notifications in the previous fortnight. The number of notifications of laboratory confirmed influenza has continued to decrease since the peak in July. (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 15 October 2023, national ILI activity in the community continued to decrease. Weekly general practitioner ILI consultation rates decreased compared to the previous week (20.30 per 100,000 compared to 25.46 per 100,000) (Figure 14). The national rate is lower than that observed at this time in 2022 but higher than the periods of 2015-2019 and 2020-2021. Influenza A(H1N1), A(H3N2) and B viruses continue to be the most detected in the community in recent weeks.

![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 is no update for this reporting period. In week 39 of 2023, 18 out of 21 PICs reported ILI surveillance data. Most PICs reported updated data since week 38. No reports are available for American Samoa, Guam, and Nauru. The Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands and Niue reported increased influenza-like illness activity in week 39 compared to the previous weeks. (Figure 15).

![Cock Islands ILI Trend - 2019 to 2023 (W39)](Figure 15)

![Fiji ILI Trend - 2019 to 2023 (W39)](Figure 15)
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 2024 southern 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]