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 47 of 2023 are presented in Table 1 below. Influenza A and B are co-circulating, however, the majority of cases reported in week 47 have been Influenza A (H3) (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 47, 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 (47 of 2023)</td>
<td>244925</td>
<td>14732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia (46 of 2023)</td>
<td>4670</td>
<td>515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China (47 of 2023)</td>
<td>1373977</td>
<td>178002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji (45 of 2023)</td>
<td>3083</td>
<td>492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan (47 of 2023)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao People’s Democratic Republic (47 of 2023)</td>
<td>6965</td>
<td>693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia (45 of 2023)</td>
<td>44862</td>
<td>7469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolia (46 of 2023)</td>
<td>11511</td>
<td>1533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand (42 of 2023)</td>
<td>2678</td>
<td>592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines (46 of 2023)</td>
<td>5768</td>
<td>578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Korea (47 of 2023)</td>
<td>13959</td>
<td>1757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore (47 of 2023)</td>
<td>12954</td>
<td>2637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viet Nam (47 of 2023)</td>
<td>1389</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>1726741</td>
<td>214196</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: Number of specimens positive for influenza by subtype, Western Pacific Region, week 47, 2022 to week 47, 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 47, sentinel hospitals in the northern provinces reported ILI% of 7.1%, which is higher than the last week (6.1%) and higher than the same week of 2020-2022 (2.5%, 2.8%, and 2.5%) (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Percentage of visits for ILI at sentinel hospitals in northern China, 2020-2023 (as of week 47) (Source: China National Influenza Center)
Mongolia
During week 45 of 2023, the ILI activity in Mongolia increased to 38 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, 2021 (from week 16-49) -2023 (as of week 45)](Source: Mongolia National Influenza Center)

Republic of Korea
In week 47 (19 November to 25 November 2023), the overall weekly influenza-like illness (ILI) rate was 45.8 per 1,000 outpatient visits, which was lower than the rate recorded in the previous weeks (37.4 on week 46). This is above the 2023-2024 epidemic threshold (Figure 4).

![Figure 4: Weekly ILI incidence rate per 1,000 outpatient consultations, Republic of Korea, 2019 (from week 36-52)-2023 (as of week 47)](Source: Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency).

Sentinel influenza surveillance
Japan
In week 46 of 2023, the weekly number of cases reported by sentinel hospital sites in Japan sharply increased compared to the previous week. Overall, the increasing trend in the number of cases has continued since week 34 with a slight decrease reported from week 44-45 (Figure 5).
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 steady decrease in the overall seasonal influenza activity after reaching its peak in late September. In week 47, the average consultation rate for influenza-like illness (ILI) among sentinel general outpatient clinics (GOPC) was 5.3 ILI cases per 1000 consultations, which was lower than 5.5 recorded in the previous week (Figure 6). The average consultation rate for ILI among sentinel private medical practitioner (PMP) clinics was 37.0 ILI cases per 1000 consultations, which was lower than 45.6 recorded in the previous week (Figure 7).

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**Figure 5:** Weekly number of influenza cases reported per reporting sentinel hospital site, Japan 2013-2023  
(Source: Japan National Institute of Infectious Diseases)

**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 47, the percentage of outpatient or emergency visits for ILI (ILI%) at national sentinel hospitals in southern provinces was 8%, higher than the last week (6.3%) and much higher than the same week in 2020-2022 (3.7%, 3.4% and 3.2%) (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 47 (19 to 25 November), the average daily number of patients seeking treatment in the polyclinics for ARI is 2663 (over 5.5 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= 1092) in the community was 10.8% in the past four weeks. Of the 178 specimens tested positive for influenza in September 2023, 103 were positive for Influenza A(H3N2) (57.9%), 48 were positive for Influenza A(pH1N1) (26.9%), and 26 were positive for Influenza B (14.6%) (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 47 (20 to 26 November 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 87 cases lower than the previous week (Figure 11). There were 172 samples tested for influenza in week 47. Influenza A/pdmH1N1 (n=19), Influenza A A/H3 (n=6), and Influenza B-Victoria (n=6) were identified.

![Weekly number of ILI cases at sentinel sites (2019 to 2023)](source: Lao National Center for Laboratory and Epidemiology)

**Cambodia**

In week 47 of 2023, the Ministry of Health received data from all seven sentinel sites in Cambodia. The number of ILI cases in Cambodia has been stable between week 46 (196 cases) and week 47 (192 cases). The positivity rate for week 47 was 23.8% (Figure 12). The proportion of weekly influenza positive samples fluctuated in 2023.

![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**

There is no update for this reporting period. 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**

There is no update for this reporting period. The last update was reported in October for 2023 winter season. In the week ending on 22 October 2023, the national ILI activity in the community slightly increased but remained lower than the rate seen at this time in 2022. No influenza was detected in community samples in the past week. Weekly general practitioner ILI consultation rates slightly increased compared to the previous week (22.02 per 100,000 compared to 20.30 per 100,000). The national rate is lower than that observed at this time in 2022 but higher than the periods of 2015-2019 *(Figure 14)*

![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 47 (19 to 25 November), 18 out of 21 PICs reported ILI surveillance data. No reports are available for American Samoa, Guam, and Nauru. Slight increase has been reported from Fiji, French Polynesia, and Wallis and Futuna reported increase in week 47. (Figure 15).

An increase in flu-like-illness has been detected by the Ministry of Health and Medical Services in Solomon Islands through the enhanced surveillance conducted daily over the past 2 weeks during the Sol2023 Pacific Games (Press release on 4 December). Following the increases in flu-like cases, the National Referral Hospital (NRH) laboratory has identified circulation of respiratory viruses such as influenza and COVID-19. Influenza and COVID-19 are not new viruses for Solomon Islands, however, they are known to easily spread during mass gathering events and can cause large increases of flu-like illnesses.
Kiribati ILI trend 2019-2023 (W47)

Marshall Islands ILI trend 2019 - 2023 (WK 47)

CNMI ILI Trend 2019 -2023 (WK 47)

New Caledonia ILI Trend 2019 -2023 (WK 47)

Niue ILI Trend 2019 - 2023 (WK45)

Palau ILI Trend 2019 - 2023 (WK 47)
Bi-weekly Influenza Situation Update
6 December 2023

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:
- Recommended composition of influenza virus vaccines for use in the 2023-2024 northern hemisphere influenza season [Link]
- 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]