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 49 of 2023 are presented in Table 1 below. Influenza A and B are co-circulating, however, the majority of cases reported in week 49 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 49, 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 (49 of 2023)</td>
<td>251025</td>
<td>14938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia (48 of 2023)</td>
<td>4902</td>
<td>548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China (49 of 2023)</td>
<td>1476695</td>
<td>212919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji (48 of 2023)</td>
<td>3166</td>
<td>521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan (49 of 2023)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao People’s Democratic Republic (49 of 2023)</td>
<td>7337</td>
<td>738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia (49 of 2023)</td>
<td>48530</td>
<td>7866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolia (49 of 2023)</td>
<td>11946</td>
<td>1560</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 (49 of 2023)</td>
<td>6405</td>
<td>632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Korea (49 of 2023)</td>
<td>14824</td>
<td>2122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore (49 of 2023)</td>
<td>13798</td>
<td>2740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viet Nam (47 of 2023)</td>
<td>1389</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>1842695</td>
<td>250908</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: Number of specimens positive for influenza by subtype, Western Pacific Region, week 49, 2022 to week 49, 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 49, sentinel hospitals in the northern provinces reported ILI% of 7.7%, which is higher than the last week (7.5%) and higher than the same week of 2020-2022 (2.6%, 3.4%, and 2.6%) (Figure 2).

![Figure 2: Percentage of visits for ILI at sentinel hospitals in northern China, 2020-2023 (as of week 49)](source: China National Influenza Center)

Mongolia

There was no update in this reporting period. 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).
Republic of Korea

In week 49 (3 December to 9 December 2023), the overall weekly influenza-like illness (ILI) rate was 61.3 per 1,000 outpatient visits, which was higher than the rate recorded in the previous weeks (48.6 on week 48). This is above the 2023-2024 epidemic threshold (Figure 4).

Sentinel influenza surveillance

Japan

In week 48 of 2023, the weekly number of cases reported by sentinel hospital sites in Japan slightly decreased 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 49, the average consultation rate for influenza-like illness (ILI) among sentinel general outpatient clinics (GOPC) was 6.0 ILI cases per 1000 consultations, which was higher than 5.4 recorded in the previous week (Figure 6). The average consultation rate for ILI among sentinel private medical practitioner (PMP) clinics was 34.4 ILI cases per 1000 consultations, which was lower than 39.1 recorded in the previous week (Figure 7).
**China (South) - ILI Surveillance**

During week 49, the percentage of outpatient or emergency visits for ILI (ILI%) at national sentinel hospitals in southern provinces was 9.1%, higher than the last week (8.7%) and much higher than the same week in 2020-2022 (3.4%, 4.0% and 3.7%) (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 49 (3 to 9 December), the average daily number of patients seeking treatment in the polyclinics for ARI is 3,590 (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= 1,333) in the community was 11.0% in the past four weeks. Of the 143 specimens tested positive for influenza in November 2023, 89 were positive for Influenza A(H3N2) (62.2%), 36 were positive for Influenza A(pH1N1) (25.2%), and 18 were positive for Influenza B (12.6%) (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 49 (4 to 10 December 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 almost the same 330 cases compared to the previous week (Figure 11). There were 179 samples tested for influenza in week 49. Influenza A/pdmH1N1 (n=9), Influenza A/H3 (n=7), and Influenza B-Victoria (n=14) were identified.

![Figure 11: Weekly number of ILI cases at sentinel sites (2019 to 2023)](image)

(Source: Lao National Center for Laboratory and Epidemiology)

**Cambodia**

There was no update in this reporting period. 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.

![Figure 12: Number of ILI samples from sentinel sites and influenza positivity rate by the week, of 2020-2023, Cambodia](image)

(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)

**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)
Pacific Island Countries and Areas (PICs) - ILI Surveillance

In week 49 (3 to 9 December), 18 out of 21 PICs reported ILI surveillance data. No reports are available for American Samoa, Guam, and Nauru. Fiji and French Polynesia reported an increase compared to the past week. (Figure 15).

(Figures 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:
- 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