Influenza Virological Surveillance in the WHO African Region
Epidemiological Week 12, March 20 to 26, 2017

During epidemiological week 12, nine laboratories in the AFR Influenza Laboratory Network (Central African Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Mali, Mauritius, Mauritania Mozambique and South Africa) reported influenza data. During this week 7 specimens tested positive (2.7% positivity) for influenza out of the 254 tested (261 collected), representing a significant decrease in influenza activity compared to that observed in week 11 (10% positivity) and to the same period in 2016 (11% positivity) (Figure 1). Influenza B (3 specimens) and the pandemic influenza A subtype (4 specimens) were detected during week 12. A similar distribution of circulating influenza types was observed in the region during epi week 12 in 2016.

Cumulatively, from epi weeks 1 to 12, the AFR Influenza Laboratory Network has tested 5,310 specimens, of which 8% (420 specimens) were positive for influenza virus.

Figure 1 – Virological assessment of influenza specimens collected in the African region, weeks 1 to 12, 2017
In week 12 influenza positivity rates in the transmission zones ranged from 0% in the Southern and Central transmission zones to over 20% in the Western transmission zone. In the Western transmission zone the positivity rate was 22% (4/18). Influenza A/H3 (3 positives) and influenza B (1 positive) constituted the positive specimens from the Western zone. In the Eastern zone the positivity rate was 4.9% (3/61). In the Eastern zone all positive specimens were influenza B.

Despite over 60 specimens being tested in the Central zone none were positive for influenza.
Influenza B continues to be the predominant influenza type circulating in all transmission zones except the Northern zone where influenza A/H3 is the predominant influenza type. (Figure 3)

Figure 3. Influenza types and subtypes detected in the 5 transmission zones in the AFR.

* Countries that report virological influenza data.