Influenza Virological Surveillance in the WHO African Region
Epidemiological Week 27, July 3 to 9, 2017

During epidemiological week 27, 16 laboratories (Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Cote d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Senegal, South Africa, Togo and Zambia) in the African region influenza laboratory network contributed data for analysis. During week 27, 124 specimens were positive for influenza out of the 534 that were tested (23% positivity rate). This is a decrease in the positivity rate from week 26 (33%) and is possibly due to more countries where there is no influenza activity reporting. Influenza types and subtypes identified were influenza A/H3 (88/124, 71%), influenza A/H1N1pdm09 (28/124, 22%) and influenza B (16/124, 5%). Two influenza A specimens remain untyped (2%).

Cumulatively* from epidemiological week 1 to 27 the AFR influenza laboratory network has collected over 18,100 specimens and tested 17,123, of which 2,016 have been positive for influenza virus (positivity rate 12%).

*adjusted for retrospective data.

**Figure 1 – Weekly virological assessment of influenza specimens collected in the African region, weeks 1 to 27, 2017**
During epidemiological week 27, data was received from the Northern transmission zone however no specimens were collected or tested during this epidemiological week.

In the Eastern transmission zone 88 specimens were collected, 75 tested and 13 positives were identified (positivity rate 17%). Influenza types/subtypes identified were influenza type A/H3 (9/13), A/H1N1pdm09 (3/13) and one influenza A positive specimens remain untyped.

In the Western transmission zone 198 specimens (204 specimens collected) were tested for influenza of which 26 were positive. The positivity rate in the Western zone was 13%. Influenza types and subtypes identified included influenza A/H3 (6/26), influenza A/H1N1pdm09 (17/26) and influenza B (2/26). One influenza A specimen remains untyped.

In the Southern transmission zone 85 positives specimens were identified from the 228 tested (positivity rate 37%). Influenza types detected in this zone during the reporting week included, influenza A/H3 (73/85), influenza A/H1N1pdm09 (8/85) and influenza B (4/85). (Figure 2).
Regionally, influenza A (all subtypes) remains the predominant influenza type circulating (1447/2106, 69%), represented by influenza A/H3 (955/1447, 66%), A/H1 (1/1447, <0.1%) and A/H1N1pdm09 (433/1447, 30%) while 58 specimens remain untyped (4%). Influenza B represents 31% (659/2106) of circulating influenza types (Figure 4).

* No positive specimens were recorded in the Southern transmission zone in Q1.

Figure 4. Influenza type and subtype distribution regionally and in the 5 transmission zones in the African region during weeks 1–13 (Q1), weeks 14-26 (Q2) and weeks 1-27, 2017.