Influenza Virological Surveillance in the WHO African Region

Epidemiological Week 29, July 17 to 23, 2017

During epidemiological week 29, 13 laboratories (Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Senegal and Togo) in the African region influenza laboratory network contributed data for analysis. During week 29, 32 specimens were positive for influenza out of the 242 that were tested (13% positivity rate). This is a decrease in the positivity rate from week 28 (16%) and may reflect the absence of data from countries in the Southern transmission zone this week. Influenza types and subtypes identified were influenza A/H3 (14/32, 44%), influenza A/H1N1pdm09 (9/32, 28%) and influenza B (8/32, 25%). One influenza A specimen (3%) remains untyped.

Cumulatively* from epidemiological week 1 to 29 the AFR influenza laboratory network has collected over 19,500 specimens and tested 18,475, of which 2 339 have been positive for influenza virus (positivity rate 13%).

*adjusted for retrospective data.

Figure 1 – Weekly virological assessment of influenza specimens collected in the African region, weeks 1 to 29, 2017
During epidemiological week 29, data was received from the Northern transmission zone however no specimens were collected or tested during this epidemiological week.

In the Eastern transmission zone 58 specimens were collected, 50 were tested and 10 positives were identified (positivity rate 20%). Influenza types/subtypes identified were influenza type A/H3 (7/10), A/H1N1pdm09 (1/10) and influenza B (1/10). One influenza specimen remains untyped.

In the Western transmission zone 162 specimens (169 specimens collected) were tested for influenza of which 22 were positive. The positivity rate in the Western zone was 13%. Influenza types and subtypes identified included influenza A/H3 (7/22), influenza A/H1N1pdm09 (8/22) and influenza B (7/22).

For this epidemiological week data was not received from countries in the Southern transmission zone (Figure 2).
In the Middle transmission zone during this epidemiological week 40 specimens were collected and 30 tested for influenza. No positives were identified among the specimens tested.

Regionally, influenza A (all subtypes) remains the predominant influenza type circulating (1660/2339, 71%), represented by influenza A/H3 (1127/1660, 68%), A/H1 (2/1632, <1%) and A/H1N1pdm09 (468/1660, 28%) while 63 specimens remain untyped (4%). Influenza B represents 29% (679/2339) of circulating influenza types (Figure 4).

**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 1–29, 2017.**

* The information presented in this report are subject to change following completeness and verification Member States.