Influenza Virological Surveillance in the WHO African Region

Epidemiological Week 34, August 21 to 27, 2017

During epidemiological week 34, 9 laboratories (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Mauritius, Senegal, South Africa and Zambia) in the African region influenza laboratory network contributed data for analysis. During week 34, 106 specimens were positive for influenza out of the 487 that were tested (22% positivity rate). This represents a similar influenza positivity rate to the previous week (week 33, 22%). Influenza types and subtypes identified were influenza A/H3 (47/106, 44%), influenza A/H1N1pdm09 (12/106, 11%) and influenza B (45/106, 43%). Two specimens remained untyped (2%).

Cumulatively* from epidemiological week 1 to 34 the AFR influenza laboratory network has collected over 24,200 specimens and tested 23,156, of which 3,189 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 34, 2017
During epidemiological week 34, data was not received from the Northern transmission zones for analysis.

In the Eastern transmission zone 8 specimens were tested for influenza virus and no positives were identified.

In the Western transmission zone 181 specimens (181 specimens collected) were tested for influenza of which 33 were positive. The positivity rate in the Western zone was 18%, double the rate that was observed in week 33. Influenza types and subtypes identified included influenza A/H3 (10/33), influenza A/H1N1pdm09 (10/33) and influenza B (13/33).

For this epidemiological week 212 specimens were collected and tested in the Southern transmission zone, of which 67 were positive for influenza. Influenza types and subtypes identified included influenza A/H3 (37/67), influenza A/H1N1pdm09 (2/67) and influenza B (26/67). Two specimens remained untyped. (Figure 2).
Regionally, influenza A (all subtypes) remains the predominant influenza type circulating (2308/3189, 72%), represented by influenza A/H3 (1663/2308, 72%), A/H1 (2/2308, <1%) and A/H1N1pdm09 (571/2308, 25%) while 72 specimens remain untyped (3%). Influenza B represents 28% (881/3189) of circulating influenza types (Figure 4).

**Middle Africa: Angola, Cameroon**, **Central African Republic**, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo**, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Sao Tome and Principe

** Countries that report virological influenza data.

In the Middle transmission zone during this epidemiological week 34, 86 specimens were collected and tested for influenza and 6 positives were identified. All positives were influenza type B.

*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 1-34, 2017.