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 15 of 2020 and week 15 of 2021 are presented in the table below. Influenza A and B are co-circulating, and the majority of cases that had been reported were Influenza B between week 52 2020 and week 14 2021. The number of cases reported to FluNet dropped to less than 20 on week 15 (Figure 1) and caution should be taken when interpreting these data as there may be reporting delays.

<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 (15)</td>
<td>117,048</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia (11)</td>
<td>1,070</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China (14)</td>
<td>567,185</td>
<td>1,893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji (4)</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan (14)</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao People’s Democratic Republic (14)</td>
<td>3,607</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia (13)</td>
<td>2,604</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolia (14)</td>
<td>1,853</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Caledonia (53*)</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand (37*)</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines (51*)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Korea (6*)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore (13)</td>
<td>2,443</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viet Nam (13)</td>
<td>1,842</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data available for 2020

Figure 1: Number of specimens positive for influenza by subtype, Western Pacific Region, week 17 2020 to week 15 2021 (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 continues to be lower than in previous seasons.

Outpatient ILI Surveillance

China (North)

During week 14 of 2021, the percentage of visits for ILI at national sentinel hospitals in Northern China was 2.1%, lower than the last week (2.2%), lower than the same week of 2018 and 2019 (2.5% and 4.0%), higher than the same week of 2020(2.0%) (Figure 2).

Mongolia

During week 13 of 2021, ILI activity in Mongolia has been decreased and remains lower than 20 cases per 10,000 population and below the lower tolerance limit (Figure 3).

Figure 2: Percentage of visits for ILI at sentinel hospitals in Northern China, 2018-2022
(Source: China National Influenza Center)

Figure 3: Proportion of outpatient ILI visits per 10,000 people in Mongolia, 2019-2021
(Source: Mongolia National Influenza Center)
**Republic of Korea**

In week 15 of 2021, the overall weekly ILI rate was 2.3 ILI cases per 1,000 outpatient visits, lower than the previous week (2.5 ILI cases per 1,000 outpatient visits) and it remains within the observed range for previous season. The ILI consultation rate has remained below the national epidemic threshold (5.8 ILI cases per 1,000 outpatient visits) since week 10 of 2020 (Figure 4).

![Figure 4: Weekly ILI incidence rate per 1,000 outpatient consultations, Republic of Korea, 2017-2021](source: Korean Centres for Disease Control and Prevention)

**Sentinel influenza surveillance**

**Japan**

In week 13 of 2021, the number of cases reported weekly by sentinel hospital sites remained very low in Japan. The number of cases this year is not in line with usual trends and is much lower than the previous years (Figure 5).

![Figure 5: Number of influenza cases reported weekly per reporting sentinel hospital site, Japan 2011-2021](source: Japan National Institute of Infectious Diseases)
Countries/areas in the tropical zone

ILI and influenza activity continued to be lower than previous seasons in most of the countries and areas in the tropical zone.

Surveillance

**Hong Kong SAR (China) – ILI and hospital Surveillance**

In week 15 of 2021, the average consultation rate for ILI among sentinel general outpatient clinics was 0.3 ILI cases per 1,000 consultations, which was lower than 0.4 ILI cases per 1,000 consultations recorded in the previous week and also lower than the previous two years (Figure 6). The average consultation rate for ILI among sentinel private medical practitioners was 8.5 ILI cases per 1,000 consultations, which was lower than 11.0 recorded in the previous week (Figure 7).

![Figure 6: ILI consultation rates at sentinel general outpatient clinics, Hong Kong SAR 2019-2021](Source: Hong Kong Centre for Health Protection)

![Figure 7: ILI consultation rates at sentinel private doctors, Hong Kong SAR 2017-2021](Source: Hong Kong Centre for Health Protection)

**China (South) - ILI Surveillance**

During Week 14 of 2021, the percentage of visits for ILI at national sentinel hospitals in Southern China was 3.0%, the same as the previous week (3.0%), lower than the same week of 2018 to 2019 (3.6% and 4.3%), higher than the same week of 2020 (2.2%) (Figure 8).

**Singapore – Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI) Surveillance**

In Week 14 of 2021, the average daily number of patients seeking treatment in polyclinics for ARI was 1,245 over 5.5 working days, which is significantly lower than the same time period in 2020 (Figure 9). The overall positivity rate for influenza among ILI samples (n=264) in the community was 0.0% in the past 4 weeks.

![Figure 8: Percentage of visits due to ILI at national sentinel hospitals in Southern China, 2017-2021](Source: China National Influenza Center)

![Figure 9: Average daily polyclinic attendances for ARI in Singapore, 2020-2021](Source: Singapore Ministry of Health)
Lao PDR
In Week 15 of 2021, the proportion of ILI cases presenting to sentinel sites decreased compared to the previous week. There is some fluctuation in the trend of 2021, but it remains lower compared to the range of 3-year average for past six weeks (Figure 10).

![Weekly proportion of ILI presentations at sentinel sites for 2021 compared to 3 years average (2018 to 2020)](source: Lao National Center for Laboratory and Epidemiology)

Cambodia
In week 15 of 2021, the number of ILI cases reported weekly by seven sentinel outpatient sites remained low in Cambodia. The number of cases has remained relatively stable after a second peak in positivity rate seen in week 40 2020 (65.2%). In week 15, 2021, there were no positive specimens and the positivity rate remains very low since week 45 2020 (Figure 11).

![Number of ILI cases at 7 sentinel sites and influenza positivity rate by week, 2020-2021, Cambodia](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 and ILI**

In the year to date, there have been 200 notifications of laboratory-confirmed influenza to the National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System. Number of cases was lower than the five year average but showing a weekly trend similar to that seen in past years(Figure 12).

![Figure 12: ILI presentations to sentinel general practitioners, by week, 2021, 2016-2021 Australia](image)

(Source: National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System, Australian Department of Health)

**New Zealand – Influenza like Illness (No update)**

General Practice-based ILI surveillance methods have changed in 2020 due to the COVID-19 response, limiting interpretability for influenza ILI surveillance. Collection of specimens commenced on 2nd June 2020 and stopped on 27 September 2020. In this period, there were 230 specimens collected from patients presenting to general practices with ILI symptoms, 0 (0%) of which were influenza positive. For the same period in the previous year, 1,617 specimens were tested, 919 (56.8%) of which were influenza positive. (Source)
Pacific Island Countries and Areas (PICs) - ILI Surveillance

In the Pacific Island Countries and Areas, in week 14 of 2021, ILI cases remained low. There is an increasing ILI trend in Samoa, Tuvalu and Vanuatu (Figure 13).

*Caution should be taken in interpreting these data as there may be changes in number of sentinel sites reporting to the Pacific Syndromic Surveillance System.*
Global influenza situation updates

Virological update

Global update

Others:

- Recommended composition of influenza virus vaccines for use in the 2021 southern hemisphere influenza season [Link]
- Recommended composition of influenza virus vaccines for use in the 2020-2021 northern hemisphere influenza season [Link]
- WHO Consultation and Information Meeting on the Composition of Influenza Virus Vaccines for Use in the 2021 Southern Hemisphere Influenza Season [Link]
- Antigenic and genetic characteristics of zoonotic influenza viruses and candidate vaccine viruses developed for potential use in human vaccines [Link]
- 4th WHO Informal Consultation on Improving Influenza Vaccine Virus Selection [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]