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 1 and week 49 of 2021 are presented in Table 1 below. Influenza A and B are co-circulating, however, the majority of cases reported from week 51, 2020 to week 49, 2021 have been Influenza B (Figure 1). Caution should be taken when interpreting these data as there are reporting delays.

Table 1: Cumulative data reported to FluNet from Western Pacific Region, week 1, 2021 to week 49, 2021

<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 (49)</td>
<td>101,889</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia (42)</td>
<td>4,979</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China (48)</td>
<td>577,609</td>
<td>16,561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji (48)</td>
<td>734</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan (47)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao People’s Democratic Republic (49)</td>
<td>2,569</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia (45)</td>
<td>2,782</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolia (45)</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Caledonia</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines (49)</td>
<td>627</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Korea (49)</td>
<td>4,287</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore (48)</td>
<td>2,385</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viet Nam (40)</td>
<td>708</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: Number of specimens positive for influenza by subtype, Western Pacific Region, week 51, 2020 to week 49, 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 48 of 2021, the percentage of visits for ILI at national sentinel hospitals in Northern China was 3.0%, higher than last week (2.8%), similar to the same period in 2018 (3.0%), lower than the same period in 2019 (3.2%), and higher than the same period in 2020 (2.5%) (Figure 2).

![Figure 2: Percentage of visits for ILI at sentinel hospitals in Northern China, 2018-2021](Source: China National Influenza Center)
**Mongolia**

During week 47 of 2021, the ILI activity in Mongolia remains the same with 20 ILI cases per 10,000 population reported in both weeks 46 and 47. This is lower than the lower tolerance limit of 24 ILI cases per 10,000 population (Figure 3).

![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 49 of 2021, the overall weekly ILI rate was 2.4 ILI cases per 1,000 outpatient visits, which was a decrease compared to the previous week (3.5 ILI cases per 1,000 outpatient visits). 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). However, from the 343 samples collected between 28 November and 4 December 2021 from patients with Acute Respiratory Infection at sentinel surveillance sites, 41% and 36% have tested positive for rhinovirus and parainfluenza, respectively.

![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 47 of 2021, the number of cases reported weekly by sentinel hospital sites remained very low in Japan. The number of cases in 2021 has been consistently low and has not been in line with usual trends in which seasonal peaks are seen between weeks 1-9. (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 some of the countries and areas in the tropical zone.

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

In week 49 of 2021, the average consultation rate for ILI at sentinel general outpatient clinics was 0.8 ILI cases per 1,000 consultations, which was lower than 1.1 ILI cases per 1,000 consultations recorded in the previous week (Figure 6). The average consultation rate for ILI among sentinel private medical practitioners was 23.2 ILI cases per 1,000 consultations, which was higher than 21.0 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 48 of 2021, the percentage of visits for ILI at national sentinel hospitals in Southern China was 3.8%, higher than the same period in 2018-2020 (3.92%, 3.5%, and 3.4% respectively) ([Figure 8](#)).

![Figure 8: Percentage of visits due to ILI at national sentinel hospitals in Southern China, 2018-2021](#)  
(Source: China National Influenza Center)

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

In week 48 of 2021, the average daily number of patients seeking treatment in polyclinics for ARI was 978 over 5.5 working days, higher than the previous season in 2020 ([Figure 9](#)). Of 164 samples tested for influenza in the past 4 weeks, the positivity rate in the community was 0%. The last specimen to test positive for influenza was collected in July 2021 and tested positive for influenza B ([Figure 10](#)).

![Figure 9: Average daily polyclinic attendances for ARI in Singapore, 2020-2021](#)  
(Source: Singapore Ministry of Health)  
![Figure 10: Monthly influenza surveillance for ARI in Singapore, 2020-2021](#)  
(Source: Singapore Ministry of Health)
Lao PDR
From 27 November to 3 December 2021, the number of ILI cases presenting to sentinel sites was 64, which was 39 cases lower compared to the previous week. Of three samples tested for influenza this week, zero (0) cases were positive. Since week 18, the proportion of ILI presentations at sentinel sites has been lower compared to the 3-year average (Figure 11).

![Figure 11: Weekly proportion of ILI presentations at sentinel sites for 2021 compared to previous 3-year average (2018 to 2020) (Source: Lao National Center for Laboratory and Epidemiology)](image)

Cambodia
In week 48 of 2021, four out of seven sentinel sites in Cambodia reported ILI data. The recent number of ILI cases appears to decrease since week 44. (Figure 12). In week 48, 2021, there were no influenza positive specimens; In 2021, there has been one human infection with avian influenza A(H9N2) detected in week 8.

![Figure 12: Number of ILI cases from seven sentinel sites and influenza positivity rate by week, 2020-2021, Cambodia (Source: Communicable Disease Control Department, Cambodia Ministry of Health)](image)
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 (no update)**

From 25 October to 7 November 2021, there were 14 laboratory-confirmed influenza notifications to the National Notifiable Disease Surveillance System (NNDSS). In the year to date, there have been 598 notifications of laboratory-confirmed influenza to the NNDSS. The number of confirmed cases reported has remained low since April 2020 and is lower than the five-year average (Figure 13).

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

Overall, based on multiple sources of surveillance information, influenza-like illness (ILI) activity has remained low in the week ending 1 October 2021. Community ILI activity remains very low for this time of year. The rates of Healthstat consultations for ILI are lower than the levels seen at the same time in 2020. The ILI consultation rates in most age groups in the week ending 1 October are below the historical rates (Figure 14). Public Health Units routinely investigate respiratory outbreaks, including laboratory testing of a sample of cases. There are currently five influenza cases detected through the surveillance system in 2021 (source).
Pacific Island Countries and Areas (PICs) - ILI Surveillance

In week 48, low levels of influenza-like illness activity continue to be reported across the Pacific Island Countries and Areas. (Figure 15).
Influenza Situation Update

Niue ILI Trend 2021 - 2021 (WK 47)

Palau ILI Trend 2020 - 2021 (WK 47)

Samoa ILI Trend 2020 - 2021 (WK 47)

Solomon Islands ILI Trend 2020 - 2021 (WK 47)

Tokelau ILI Trend 2020 - 2021 (WK 47)

Tonga ILI Trend 2020 - 2021 (WK 47)

Tuvalu ILI Trend 2020 - 2021 (WK 45)

Vanuatu ILI Trend 2020 - 2021 (WK 47)

Epi week

ILI 2021

ILI 2020

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

Figure 15: Reported cases of influenza-like illness in Pacific Island Countries, 2020-2021
(Source: Pacific Syndromic Surveillance System Weekly Bulletin)

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’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