Influenza Virological Surveillance in the WHO African Region

Epidemiological Week 35, August 28 to 3 September, 2017

During epidemiological week 35, 19 laboratories (Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Cote d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Togo, Uganda and Zambia) in the African region influenza laboratory network contributed data for analysis. During week 35, 128 specimens were positive for influenza out of the 566 that were tested (23% positivity rate). This represents a similar influenza positivity rate to the previous week (week 34, 22%). Influenza types and subtypes identified were influenza A/H3 (43/128, 34%), influenza A/H1N1pdm09 (13/128, 10%) and influenza B (68/128, 53%). Four specimens remained untyped (3%).

Cumulatively* from epidemiological week 1 to 35 the AFR influenza laboratory network has collected over 24,400 specimens and tested 23,456, of which 3,260 have been positive for influenza virus (positivity rate 14%).

*adjusted for retrospective data.

Figure 1 – Weekly virological assessment of influenza specimens collected in the African region, weeks 1 to 35, 2017
During epidemiological week 35, one specimen was collected and tested in the Northern transmission zone, which tested negative for influenza.

In the Eastern transmission zone 31 specimens were tested for influenza virus of the 113 tested (120 collected). The positivity rate was 27%, which is a sharp increase in comparison to week 34 were no positives were identified. Influenza types and subtypes identified included influenza A/H3 (13/31), influenza A/H1N1pdm09 (2/31) and influenza B (13/31). Three influenza A specimens were not typed.

In the Western transmission zone 199 specimens (192 specimens collected) were tested for influenza of which 27 were positive. The positivity rate in the Western zone was 13%, a slight decrease from week 34 (18%). Influenza types and subtypes identified included influenza A/H3 (2/27), influenza A/H1N1pdm09 (10/27) and influenza B (14/27). One influenza A specimens was not typed.

For this epidemiological week 228 specimens were collected and tested in the Southern transmission zone, of which 67 were positive for influenza (positivity rate 29%). Influenza types and subtypes identified included influenza A/H3 (28/67), influenza A/H1N1pdm09 (1/67) and influenza B (38/67). (Figure 2).
In the Middle transmission zone during epidemiological week 35, 32 specimens were collected and tested for influenza and 3 positives were identified (influenza positivity rate 9%). All positives were influenza type B and all were from Central African Republic.

Regionally, influenza A (all subtypes) remains the predominant influenza type circulating (2352/3260, 72%), represented by influenza A/H3 (1709/2352, 73%), A/H1 (2/2352, <1%) and A/H1N1pdm09 (570/2352, 24%) while 71 specimens remain untyped (3%). Influenza B represents 28% (908/3260) 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.

* 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 1-35, 2017.**