Influenza Virological Surveillance in the WHO African Region

Epidemiological Week 36, September 4 to 10, 2017

During epidemiological week 36, 19 laboratories (Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Cote d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Uganda and Zambia) in the African region influenza laboratory network contributed data for analysis. During week 36, 125 specimens were positive for influenza out of the 748 that were tested (17% positivity rate). This represents a decrease in influenza positivity rate to the previous week (week 35, 23%). Influenza types and subtypes identified were influenza A/H3 (37/125, 30%), influenza A/H1N1pdm09 (19/125, 15%) and influenza B (68/125, 54%). One specimen remained untyped (1%).

Cumulatively* from epidemiological week 1 to 36 the AFR influenza laboratory network has collected over 25,200 specimens and tested 24,204, of which 3,385 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 36, 2017
During epidemiological week 36, no specimens were collected in the Northern transmission zone.

In the Eastern transmission zone 16 specimens tested positive for influenza virus of the 139 tested (155 collected). The positivity rate was 11%, representing a >50% decrease in positivity rate from week 35 (27%). Influenza types and subtypes identified included influenza A/H3 (5/16) and influenza B (10/16). One influenza A specimen remained not typed.

In the Western transmission zone 288 specimens (291 specimens collected) were tested for influenza of which 38 were positive. The positivity rate in the Western zone was 13%, as was observed in week 35. Influenza types and subtypes identified included influenza A/H3 (15/38), influenza A/H1N1pdm09 (14/38) and influenza B (9/38).

For this epidemiological week 225 specimens were collected and 224 tested for influenza in the Southern transmission zone, of which 59 were positive for influenza (positivity rate 26%). Influenza types and subtypes identified included influenza A/H3 (17/59), influenza A/H1N1pdm09 (3/59) and influenza B (39/59). (Figure 2).
Middle Africa: Angola, Cameroon**, Central African Republic**, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo**, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Sao Tome and Principe

Influenza types and subtypes identified included influenza A/H1pdm09 (2/12) and influenza B (10/16).

** Countries that report virological influenza data.

Regionally, influenza A (all subtypes) remains the predominant influenza type circulating (2409/3385, 71%), represented by influenza A/H3 (1746/2409, 72%), A/H1 (2/2409, <1%) and A/H1N1pdm09 (589/2409, 25%) while 72 specimens remain untyped (3%). Influenza B represents 29% (976/3385) of circulating influenza types (Figure 4).

**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 1-36, 2017.

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