Influenza Virological Surveillance in the WHO African Region

Epidemiological Week 37, September 11 to 17, 2017

During epidemiological week 37, 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 37, 126 specimens were positive for influenza out of the 694 that were tested (18% positivity rate). Influenza types and subtypes identified were influenza A/H3 (36/126, 28%), influenza A/H1N1pdm09 (20/126, 16%) and influenza B (68/126, 54%). Two influenza A specimens remained untyped (2%).

Cumulatively* from epidemiological week 1 to 37 the AFR influenza laboratory network has collected over 25,900 specimens and tested 24,898, of which 3,511 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 37, 2017
During epidemiological week 37, no specimens were collected in the Northern transmission zone.

In the Eastern transmission zone 19 specimens tested positive for influenza virus of the 129 tested (144 collected). The positivity rate (15%) was slightly higher than that observed in week 36 (11%). Influenza types and subtypes identified included influenza A/H3 (11/19), influenza A/H1N1pdm09 (4/19) and influenza B (2/19). Two influenza A specimens remained not typed.

In the Western transmission zone 281 specimens (283 specimens collected) were tested for influenza of which 44 were positive. The positivity rate in the Western zone was 16%, a slight increase from the rate observed in week 36 (13%). Influenza types and subtypes identified included influenza A/H3 (14/44), influenza A/H1N1pdm09 (15/44) and influenza B (15/44).

For this epidemiological week 181 specimens were collected and tested for influenza in the Southern transmission zone, of which 41 were positive for influenza (positivity rate 23%). Influenza types and subtypes identified included influenza A/H3 (9/41), influenza A/H1N1pdm09 (1/41) and influenza B (31/41). (Figure 2).
In the Middle transmission zone during epidemiological week 37, 103 specimens were collected and tested for influenza and 22 positives were identified (influenza positivity rate 21%). This represents a nearly two fold increase in the positivity rate compared to week 36 (12%). Influenza types and subtypes identified included influenza A/H3 (2/22) and influenza B (20/22). All but 2 positive specimens were from Central African Republic.

**Countries that report virological influenza data.**

Regionally, influenza A (all subtypes) remains the predominant influenza type circulating (2467/3511, 70%), represented by influenza A/H3 (1782/2467, 72%), A/H1 (2/2467, <1%) and A/H1N1pdm09 (609/2467, 25%) while 74 specimens remain untyped (3%). Influenza B represents 30% (1044/3511) of circulating influenza types (Figure 4).

**Influenza viruses**

- **A/H1**
- **A/H1N1pdm09**
- **A/H3**
- **A not typed**
- **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 1-37, 2017.