Influenza Virological Surveillance in the WHO African Region

Epidemiological Week 38, September 18 to 24, 2017

During epidemiological week 38, 16 laboratories (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Cote d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Zambia) in the African region influenza laboratory network contributed data for analysis. During week 38, 107 specimens were positive for influenza out of the 597 that were tested (18% positivity rate). Influenza types and subtypes identified were influenza A/H3 (28/107, 26%), influenza A/H1N1pdm09 (30/107, 28%) and influenza B (47/107, 44%). Two influenza A specimens remained untyped (2%).

Cumulatively* from epidemiological week 1 to 38 the AFR influenza laboratory network has collected over 26,500 specimens and tested 25,495, of which 3,618 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 38, 2017
During epidemiological week 38, no data was received from the Northern transmission zone.

In the Eastern transmission zone 20 specimens tested positive for influenza virus of the 157 tested (164 collected). The positivity rate was 13%. Influenza types and subtypes identified included influenza A/H3 (8/20), influenza A/H1N1pdm09 (5/20) and influenza B (5/20). Two influenza A specimens remained not typed.

In the Western transmission zone 218 specimens were collected and tested for influenza of which 46 were positive. The positivity rate in the Western zone was 21%, an increase from week 37 (16%). Influenza types and subtypes identified included influenza A/H3 (9/46), influenza A/H1N1pdm09 (24/46) and influenza B (13/46).

For epidemiological week 38, 184 specimens were collected and tested for influenza in the Southern transmission zone, of which 35 were positive for influenza (positivity rate 19%). There has been a steady decline in the influenza positivity rate in the Southern transmission zone over the past weeks, corresponding to the end of the Southern Hemisphere winter. Influenza types and subtypes identified included influenza A/H3 (9/35) and influenza B (26/35). (Figure 2).
In the Middle transmission zone during epidemiological week 38, 38 specimens were collected and tested for influenza and 6 positives were identified (influenza positivity rate 16%). This represents a sharp decrease from week 37 (positivity rate 21%). Influenza types and subtypes identified included influenza A/H3 (2/6), influenza A/H1N1pdm09 (1/6) and influenza B (3/6).

**Countries that report virological influenza data.**

Regionally, influenza A (all subtypes) remains the predominant influenza type circulating (2527/3618, 70%), represented by influenza A/H3 (1810/2527, 72%), A/H1 (2/2527, <1%) and A/H1N1pdm09 (639/2527, 25%) while 76 specimens remain untyped (3%). Influenza B represents 30% (1091/3618) 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](image)

**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 1-38, 2017.**

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