Influenza Virological Surveillance in the WHO African Region
Epidemiological Week 43, October 23 to 29

During epidemiological week 43, 16 laboratories (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Cote d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Zambia) in the African region influenza laboratory network contributed data for analysis. During week 43, 105 specimens were positive for influenza out of the 525 that were tested (20% positivity rate). The positivity rate for week 43 was slightly less than that observed in week 42 (23%). Influenza types and subtypes identified were influenza A/H3 (18/105, 17%), influenza A/H1N1pdm09 (59/105, 56%) and influenza B (25/105, 24%). Three specimens remains untyped (3%).

Cumulatively* from epidemiological week 1 to 43 the AFR influenza laboratory network has collected over 29,500 specimens and tested 28,441, of which 4,300 have been positive for influenza virus (positivity rate 15%).

*adjusted for retrospective data.

Figure 1 – Weekly virological assessment of influenza specimens collected in the African region, weeks 1 to 43, 2017
During epidemiological week 43, no data was received from the Northern transmission zone.

In the Eastern transmission zone 6 specimens were tested positive for influenza virus of the 54 tested (61 collected). The positivity rate was 11%, which is slightly lower than the positivity rate reported for week 42 (14%). Influenza types and subtypes identified included influenza A/H3 (1/6) and influenza B (5/6).

In the Western transmission zone 266 specimens (269 specimens collected) were tested for influenza of which 50 were positive. The positivity rate in the Western zone was 19%, a slight increase on the positivity rate reported for week 42 (15%). Influenza types and subtypes identified included influenza A/H3 (7/50), influenza A/H1N1pdm09 (39/50) and influenza B (4/50).

For this epidemiological week 130 specimens were collected and tested in the Southern transmission zone, of which 8 were positive for influenza (positivity rate 6%). All 8 positive specimens were influenza type B.
In the Middle transmission zone during this epidemiological week, 75 specimens were collected and tested for influenza and 41 positives were identified. The positivity rate in this transmission zone remains high (55% week 43) due to ongoing influenza activity in Cameroon. Influenza types and subtypes identified included influenza A/H3 (20/41), influenza A/H1N1pdm09 (20/41) and influenza B (8/41). Three influenza A specimens remain untyped.

** Countries that report virological influenza data.

Regionally, influenza A (all subtypes) remains the predominant influenza type circulating (3021/4300, 70%), represented by influenza A/H3 (1995/3021, 66%), A/H1 (2/3021, <1%) and A/H1N1pdm09 (942/3021, 31%) while 82 specimens remain untyped (3%). Influenza B represents 30% (1279/4300) of circulating influenza types (Figure 4).

**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 1-43, 2017.**