

Current major event

Enhancing Pandemic Influenza Preparedness : 2017 and beyond

A Regional working group meeting was held on 21-22 May 2017 to monitor the progress of activities for improving Pandemic Influenza Preparedness in the Eastern Mediterranean Region of WHO.

Editorial note

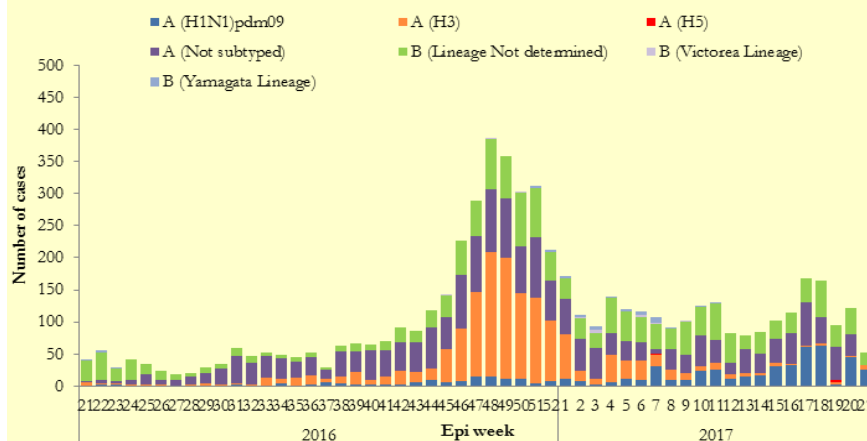
In May 2011 during the 64th World Health Assembly, WHO Member states unanimously adopted the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness (PIP) Framework.

The main objective of Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework at the global level is to improve sharing of influenza viruses with human pandemic potential and to establish equitable access to vaccines and other lifesaving products at the time of a pandemic.

Pandemic influenzas are unpredictable events which occur with great rapidity, and whose time of origin and eventual severity remain fairly unknown. There is, therefore, a strong need for building countries' capacity to monitor, assess and early detect emergence of any novel influenza virus with pandemic potentials. The Eastern Mediterranean Region of WHO remains extremely susceptible to introduction and circulation of animal and zoonotic flu viruses with pandemic potential owing to the fact that the Region is in the pathway of migratory birds.

As part of improving preparedness for Pandemic Influenza, countries in the Region have been assisted with establishment/enhancement of surveillance for Influenza-like-Illness (ILI) and Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI). Strong commitment of the ministries of health in the region has resulted in the expansion of SARI/ILI surveillance system in the region with a total of 19 countries currently implementing sentinel-based surveillance system for SARI and ILI. At the same time, the laboratories' capacities for detection, characterization and sharing of influenza viruses with epidemic/pandemic potentials has also been greatly enhanced over the years.

Number of positive Influenza cases by sub-type in EMR, May 2016 - May 2017



PIP countries sharing data with EMFLU/FluNet and FluID in EMR

Country	EMFLU Network	FluNet	FluID
Afghanistan	✓	✓	✓
Egypt	✓	✓	
Jordan	✓	✓	
Lebanon	✓	✓	
Morocco	✓	✓	✓
Yemen	✓		

Seven countries in the Region (Afghanistan, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Yemen) are receiving extended support from the PIP Framework and these countries are regularly sharing their influenza surveillance data (*please see the box*) with the regional platform such as the Eastern Mediterranean Flu Network (EMFLU) as well as with the FluID and FluNet of the Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS).

One of the requirements for pandemic influenza preparedness planning is the ability of the countries to report early emergence of a novel flu virus with pandemic potential. The capacities of the countries to characterize the flu viruses therefore needs to be enhanced. Revising, testing and updating national pandemic preparedness plans in accordance with evidence-based best practices also need to be prioritized in all countries. Greater efforts to integrate seasonal influenza surveillance with animal health surveillance under the "One health" framework should also be promoted.

Update on outbreaks

in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

MERS-CoV in Saudi Arabia; **Cholera** in Somalia; **Cholera** in Yemen; **Chikungunya** in Pakistan.

Current public health events of international concern

[cumulative N° of cases (deaths), CFR %]

Avian Influenza: 2006-2017

Egypt (A/H5N1) [359 (122), 34%]
Egypt (A/H9N2) [3 (0)]

Chikungunya: 2016-2017

Pakistan [5,528 (0)]

MERS-CoV: 2012-2017

Saudi Arabia [1,613 (646), 40.1%]

Cholera: 2016-2017

Somalia [45,400 (738), 1.6%]
Yemen [95,059 (781), 0.82%]

Meningococcal disease: 2017

Nigeria [13,943 (1,112), 8%]

Avian Influenza A (H7N9): 2013-2017

China [1,486 (571), 38.4%]

Ebola Virus Disease: 2017

DRC [7 (4), 57%]

Wild poliovirus: 2014-2017

Pakistan [382 (0)]
Afghanistan [64 (0)]

Zika Virus Infection: 2015-2017

84 countries and territories have reported transmission so far.