

Current major events

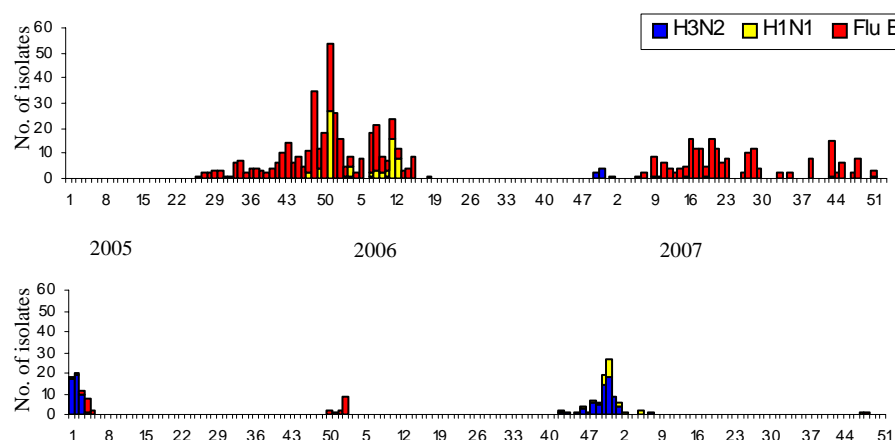
EMRO NICs

participate in composition of influenza virus vaccines, 2008-2009

During the last three years (2005-2007), National Influenza Centre (NIC), Egypt isolated a total of 109 influenza viruses out of 3,979 specimens collected (a positivity rate of 2.7 %). The predominant influenza virus strain was Flu B (N=95, 87.2%). Influenza A (H3N2) constituted 11% (12 isolates) and influenza A (H1N1) constituted 1.8% (2 isolates only).

The NIC, Morocco, isolated influenza viruses in 98 (8.8%) out of 1,120 specimens tested. Isolated viruses included 64 (65.3%) isolates of influenza A (H3N2),

Weekly distribution of seasonal influenza viruses in Egypt (upper) and Morocco (lower graph) 2005-2007



27 (27.6%) of A (H1N1) and 7 (7.1%) of Flu B. The NIC, Oman isolated 11 influenza viruses out of 195 specimens (5.6% positivity rate): 7 (63.6%) were influenza B and 4 (36.4%) were influenza A (H3N2).

Note the difference in the predominant influenza virus strains and period of circulation between Egypt and Morocco in the reporting period: 2005 - 2007. Data for year 2005 (weeks 1-26) were not available for Egypt.

Editorial note

The WHO Global Influenza Surveillance Network (GISN) currently comprises of more than 120 National Influenza Centres (NIC) in 94 countries and 4 WHO Collaborating Centres for reference and research (WHOCCs). The NICs perform primary virus isolation and preliminary antigenic characterizations and ship the newly isolated virus isolates to the four WHOCCs for advanced antigenic and genetic analysis, the results of which are used for the annual WHO recommendations on the composition of the influenza vaccine for the northern and southern hemisphere influenza seasons (November 2007 to April 2008) and (May to October 2009) respectively. Also, GISN serves as a global alert mechanism for the emergence of influenza virus with pandemic potential.

In the Eastern Mediterranean Region of WHO, only eight countries (Egypt, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Pakistan, Sudan, Tunisia) are designated NICs; some of these NICs are not functional.

In 2004, WHO/EMRO, the US Naval Medical Research Unit No. 3 (NAMRU-

Recommended composition of influenza virus vaccines for the northern hemisphere 2008-2009 influenza season

During the 2007-2008 winter season, comparatively low levels of influenza activity were observed in the EMR. Composition of vaccines for use in the northern hemisphere countries for 2008-2009 winter season has been recommended by WHO:

- (1) An A/Brisbane/59/2007 (H1N1)-like virus
- (2) An A/Brisbane/10/2007 (H3N2)-like virus, and
- (3) A B/Florida/4/2006-like virus

3) have signed a tri-lateral agreement with six countries to establish a Regional network for seasonal influenza surveillance: (Egypt, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Syria). Recently, three countries co-signed the tri-lateral agreement: (Jordan, Libya and Sudan).

EMRO continues to recommend enhanced surveillance for seasonal influenza in order to early detect viral antigenic shift and emergence of novel virus capable of causing a pandemic.

Update on outbreaks

in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

Cholera: Beled Weyne, Somalia.

Current public health events of international concern

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

Avian influenza

Egypt	[47 (20), 42.5%]
Indonesia	[129 (105), 81.4%]
Viet Nam	[106 (52), 49.1%]

Cholera

D.R. Congo	[4136 (126), 3.1%]
Somalia	[477 (4), 0.8%]*
Namibia	[75 (1), 1.3%]
Iraq	[4,697 (24), 0.5%]

Acute Watery Diarrhea

Myanmar	[50 (17), 34.0%]
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Lassa Fever

Nigeria	[5 (3), 60.0%]
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Yellow Fever

Paraguay	[24 (8), 33.3%]
Argentina	5 (1), 20.0%]

(*=Unofficial figures), CFR=Case-Fatality Rate