

## Current major event

### Influenza in the West Bank and Gaza Strip

After reporting an increasing trend of influenza virus circulation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip during the current winter season, the situation has markedly improved during the past few weeks. The number of severe influenza cases has declined in recent time.

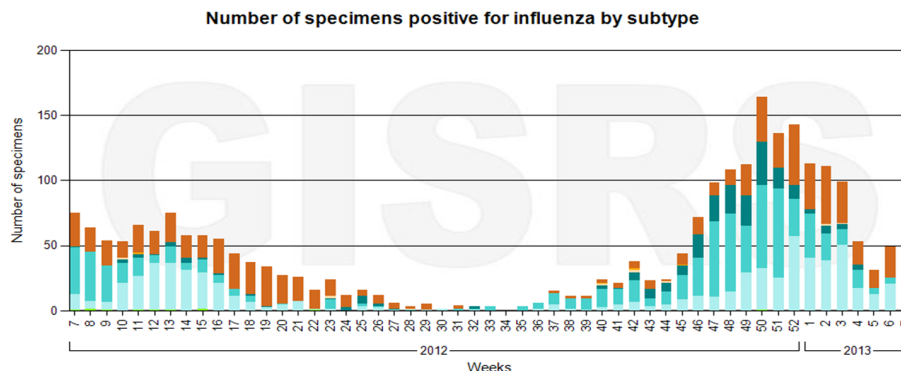
### Editorial note

The incidence and severity of influenza infections has made headlines across countries in the region and particularly in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in recent time. Influenza A (H1N1) pdm09 has been laboratory-confirmed in 740 cases amongst which 31 were fatal.

With the onset of winter season, the health care workers of the West Bank and Gaza Strip reported increasing trend of respiratory viral infections at outpatients as well as in hospitalized patients. The intensity of respiratory infections were reported to be severe in adults and also amongst those with chronic health conditions

As soon as influenza infections were laboratory-confirmed and the surveillance system detected an unusual trend, the health authority of West Bank and Gaza Strip mounted an extra-ordinary public health response to interrupt influenza transmission amongst at risk-populations. Treating all severe and hospitalized cases adequately with anti-viral, selective prophylactic treatment of the high risk groups amongst the close contacts of severe cases, effective risk communication using public media and targeting health-care workers and immune-compromised patients for administering seasonal influenza vaccines were part of these public health measures rapidly instituted by the health authority. Throughout the period, such measures were in place, the health authority of West bank and Gaza Strip showed exemplary transparency and leadership in dealing with the situation and in communicating with the public, media,

### Influenza virus detection in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (2012-2013)



### Influenza cases reported from selected countries in the region (As of 07/02/2013)

Country	Lab-confirmed cases	Death
Iraq	358	10
W/Bank & Gaza Strip	740	31
Yemen	24	7
Jordan	119	3
Morocco	11	1

health-care workers and also with other partners like WHO and the health authorities of the neighbouring countries. As a result of such coordinated public health efforts, the situation was rapidly controlled. The number of severe respiratory infections from influenza dropped considerably and many unnecessary deaths were averted.

The pandemic influenza was over in 2010 but the influenza A (H1N1) pdm09 virus is continuing to circulate as a seasonal influenza virus. It will continue to cause sporadic deaths among those with underlying disease conditions. As for the current situation observed from a number of countries in the region, the situation needs to be monitored closely for any unusual events, such as clusters of severe respiratory illness or death. The experience in West Bank and Gaza Strip has shown that with openness and timely public health intervention, the impact of influenza or any other viral infections can be successfully managed.

### Update on outbreaks

#### in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

**Novel Coronavirus** in Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Jordan; **Yellow fever** in Sudan; **Hepatitis E**: in South Sudan; **WNV** in Tunisia.

### Current public health events of international concern

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

#### Avian influenza

Egypt	[170 (61), 35.88]
Indonesia	[192 (160), 83.3 %]
Viet Nam	[123(61), 49.5%]
Cambodia	[26(23), 88.4%]
Global total	[616(365), 59.2%]

#### Hepatitis E

S. Sudan	[3347 (78),2.3%]#
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#### Novel coronavirus

Saudi Arabia	[5 (3), 60 %]
Qatar	[2 (0)]
Jordan	[2 (2), 100%]

#### West Nile Virus

Tunisia	[81 (12) 14.8%]#
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#### Yellow fever

Sudan	[849 (171), 20.2%] #
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#### Ebola Haemorrhagic Fever

D.R Congo	[77(36), 46.7%]
Uganda	[7 (4), 57%]

CFR=Case-Fatality Rate; # Suspected cases