![World Health Organization — Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean]

Influenza monthly update

April - June 2020

Influenza testing and data reporting have declined due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. WHO continues to encourage countries in the Region to maintain influenza surveillance in order to monitor influenza activity. Bulletins will therefore be published on a quarterly basis until further notice.

Between April and June 2020, 15 countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region reported data to FluNet and/or EMFLU. Out of 68 650 enrolled cases, 5% were tested during this period (3488 specimens). This represents a steep reduction in the number of specimens tested as compared to the first three months of the year, when 92.7% of cases (46 118 specimens) were tested out of 49 743 enrolled cases. Out of the 3488 processed specimens, 43 (1.2%) tested positive for seasonal influenza viruses, with all positive specimens reported from 4 countries.
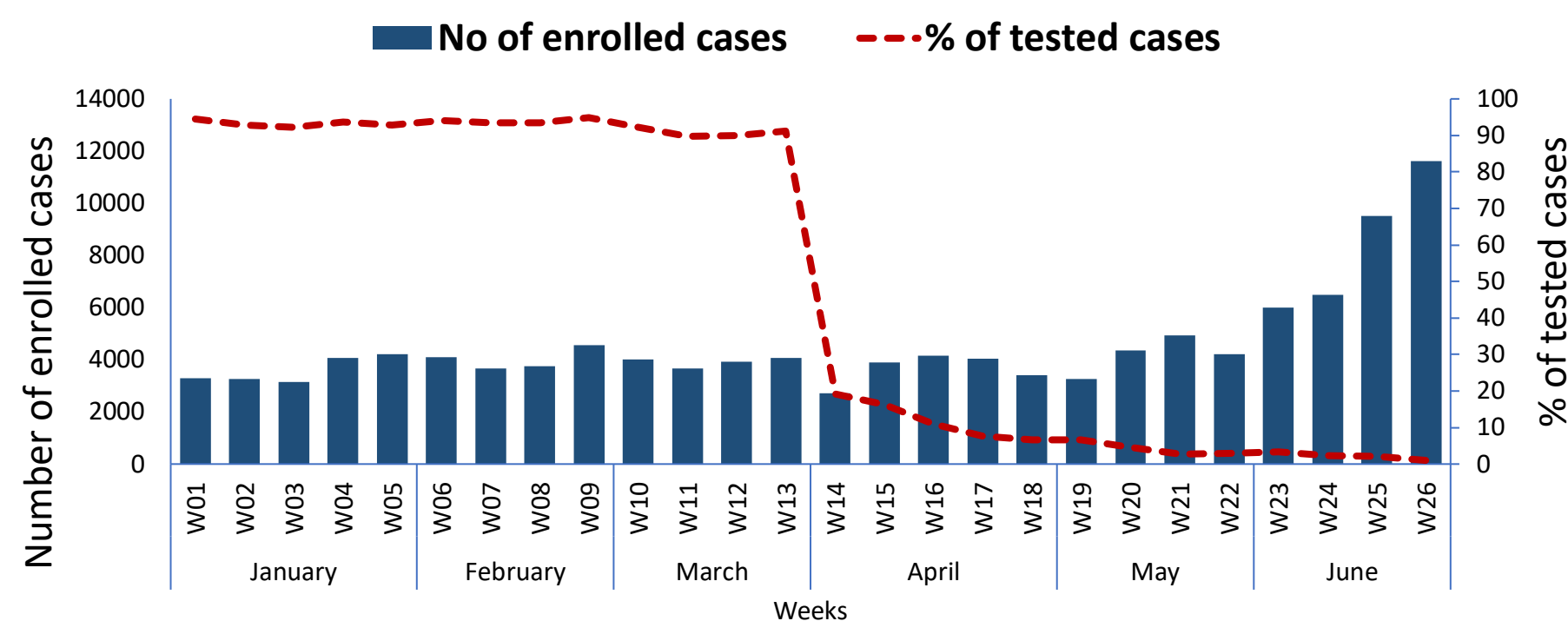

Fig 1. Number of enrolled cases and percentage of tested cases per week
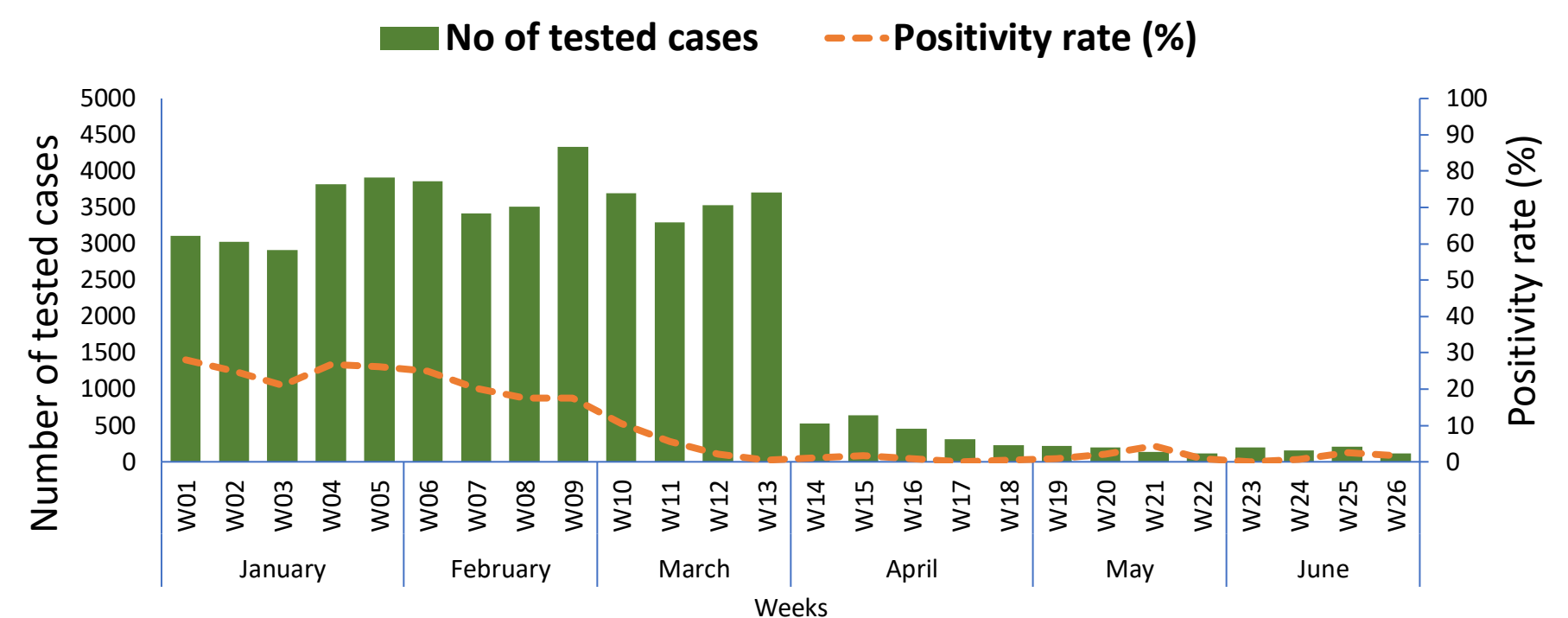

Fig 2. Number of positive influenza cases and influenza positivity rate per week

In the previous month of **March**, A(H1N1)pdm09 was attributed to 35% of the positive cases, while A(H3) was the least reported subtype (6%). In contrast, the influenza virus subtype predominantly reported in **April** was A(H3) (55%), while the A(H1N1)pdm09 virus was attributed to 18% of positive cases. In **May**, A(H1N1)pdm09 was detected the most (54%), while in **June**, the most detected subtype was A(H3) (50%).
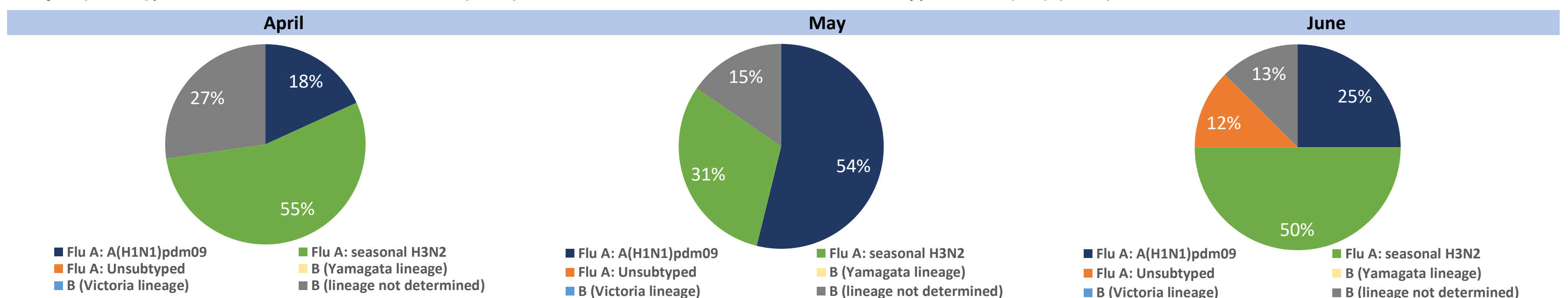

Fig 3. Circulating influenza viruses by sub-type

Between January and June 2020, 19 countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region reported data to FluNet and/or EMFLU, namely Afghanistan, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

Out of 49 606 processed specimens during those six months, 8017 (16.16%) tested positive for seasonal influenza viruses. The highest positivity rates were recorded in Lebanon (52.43%) and Syrian Arab Republic (47.66%). Of the positive specimens, 5808 (72.4%) were influenza A viruses, including 2440 (30.4%) influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 viruses, 770 (9.6%) influenza A(H3) viruses and 2598 (32.4%) influenza A (not subtyped) viruses. Influenza B viruses (lineage not determined) accounted for 25% of the positive cases.

Country	No of enrolled cases	No of tested cases	Flu A: A(H1N1)pdm09	Flu A: seasonal H3N2	Flu A: Unsubtyped	B (Yamagata lineage)	B (Victoria lineage)	B (lineage not determined)	Positivity rate
Afghanistan	1 963	1 122	38	61	0	2	19	1	10.78
Bahrain	285	261	14	8	10	0	8	6	17.62
Egypt	9 912	9 912	358	129	0	0	0	148	6.41
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	4 352	4 352	23	3	92	0	0	583	16.11
Iraq	66 832	5 391	101	44	0	0	0	159	5.64
Jordan	888	888	42	29	4	0	0	23	11.04
Kuwait	3 595	1 273	9	15	131	0	0	63	17.12
Lebanon	565	555	86	40	0	0	154	11	52.43
Morocco	764	764	35	121	0	0	0	31	24.48
occupied Palestinian territory	4 351	4 351	145	188	0	0	0	36	8.48
Oman	2 084	1 545	60	31	42	0	6	15	9.97
Pakistan	165	165	6	7	0	0	0	0	7.88
Qatar	14 994	14 994	927	47	2 116	0	0	659	25.00
Saudi Arabia	4 847	1 343	228	0	146	0	0	132	37.68
Sudan	93	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
Syrian Arab Republic	153	128	1	0	56	0	0	4	47.66
Tunisia	773	773	220	12	1	0	0	72	39.46
United Arab Emirates	1 330	1 328	84	27	0	0	13	59	13.78
Yemen	447	443	63	8	0	0	0	5	17.16
Grand Total	**118 393**	**49 606**	**2 440**	**770**	**2 598**	**2**	**200**	**2 007**	**16.16**

Table 1. Reported cases by country during January-June 2020

Source of data: FluNet and EMFLU