

July - September 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.

Influenza monthly update

Between **July and September 2020**, 13 countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region reported data to FluNet and/or EMFLU. Out of 64 149 enrolled cases, 7% were tested during this period (4552 specimens). This represents a slight increase in the number of specimens tested as compared to the previous three months, when 5% of cases (3488 specimens) were tested out of 68 650 enrolled cases. Out of the 4552 processed specimens, 38 (0.8%) tested positive for seasonal influenza viruses, with all positive specimens reported from 2 countries.

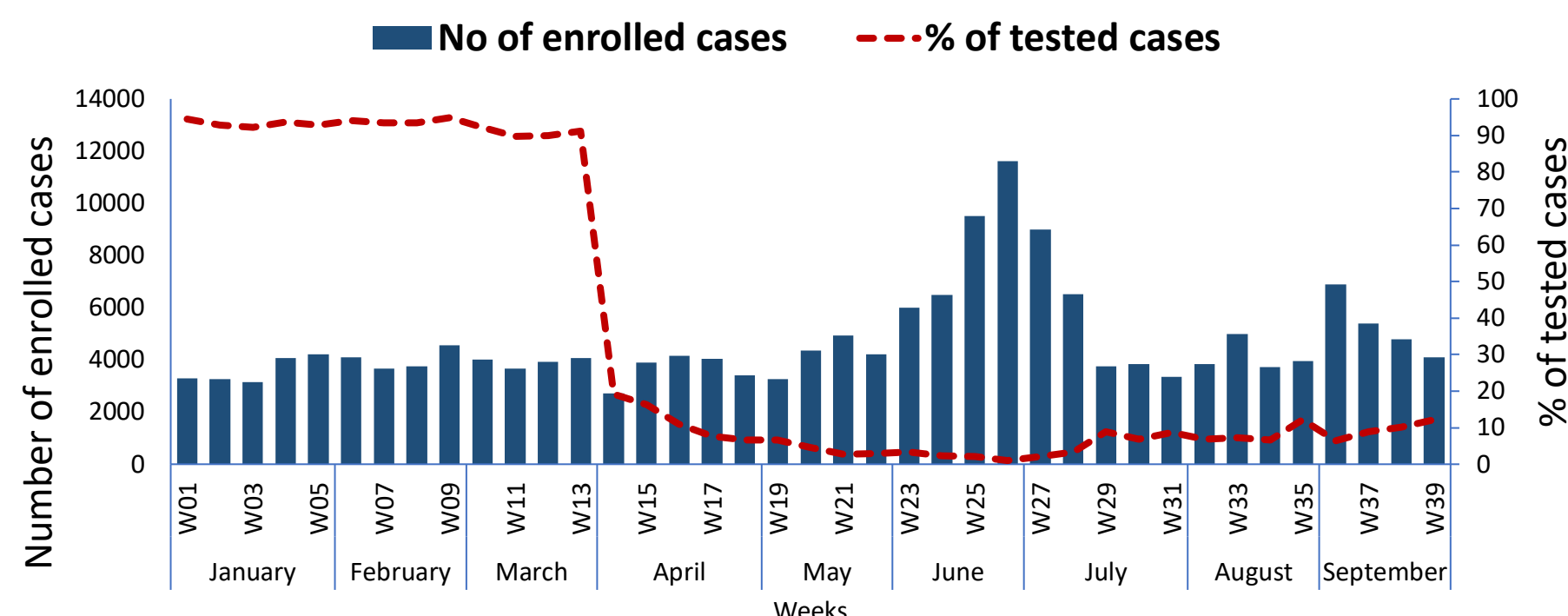


Fig 1. Number of enrolled cases and percentage of tested cases per week

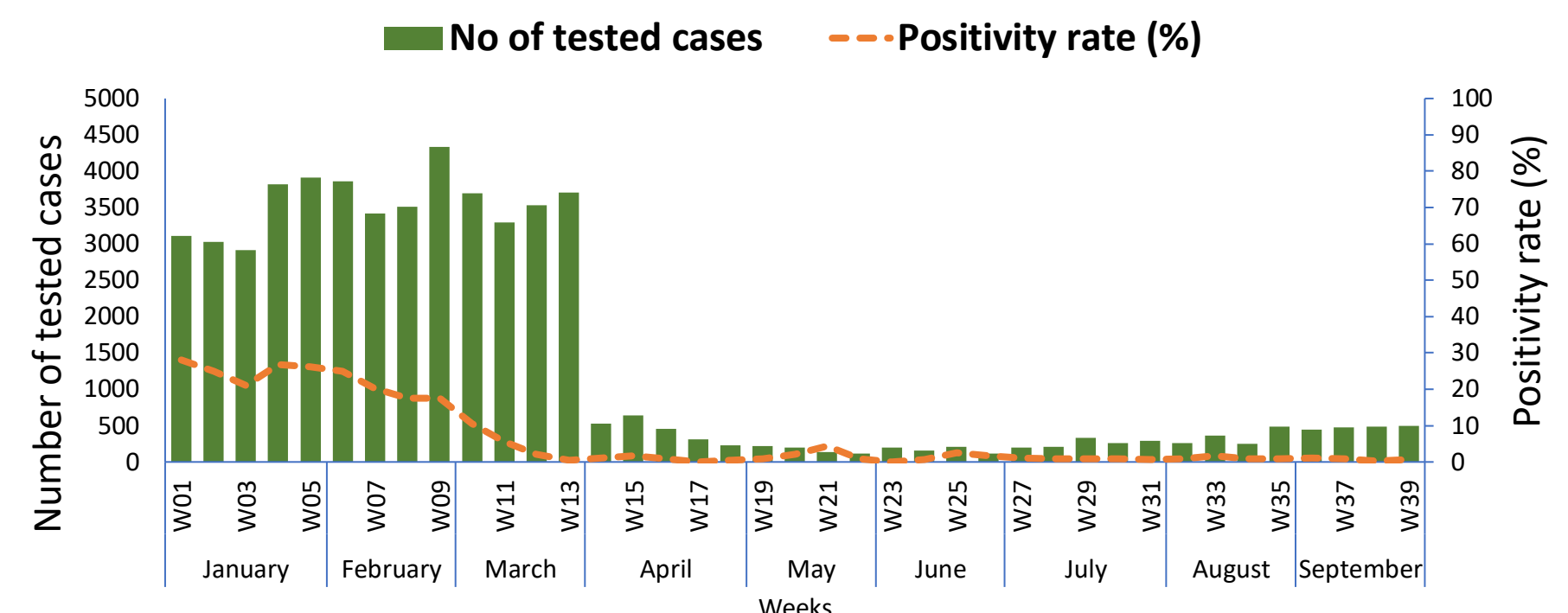


Fig 2. Number of positive influenza cases and influenza positivity rate per week

In the previous month of **June**, A(H3) was attributed to 50% of the positive cases, while A(Unsubtyped) was the least reported subtype (12%). In contrast, the influenza virus subtype predominantly reported in **July** was A(H1N1)pdm09 (55%), while the A(H3) was attributed to 18% of positive cases. In **August**, A(H1N1)pdm09 was detected the most (64%), while in **September**, the most detected subtype was A(H1N1)pdm09 (62%).

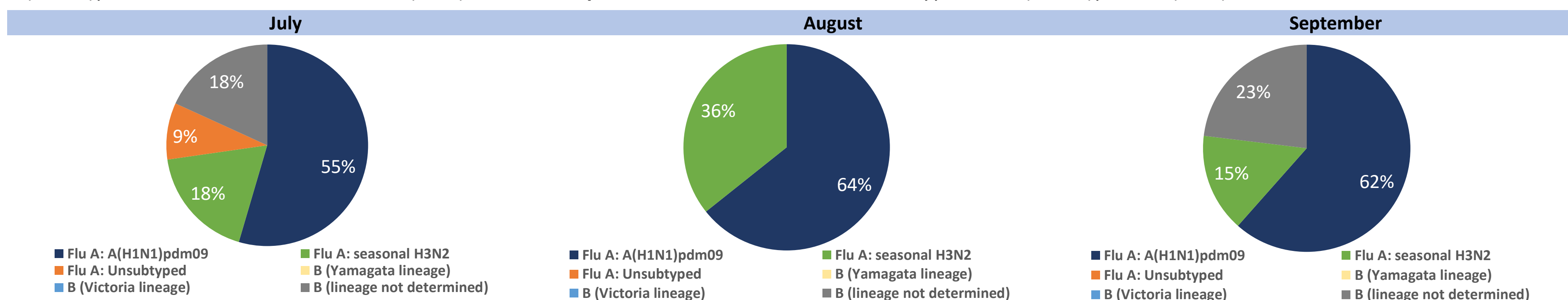


Fig 3. Circulating influenza viruses by sub-type

Between **January and September 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 54 158 processed specimens during those nine months, 8055 (14.87%) tested positive for seasonal influenza viruses. The highest positivity rates were recorded in Lebanon (52.43%) and Syrian Arab Republic (45.19%). Of the positive specimens, 5841 (72.5%) were influenza A viruses, including 2463 (30.58%) influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 viruses, 779 (9.7%) influenza A(H3) viruses and 2599 (32.3%) influenza A (Unsubtyped) viruses. Influenza B viruses (lineage not determined) accounted for 24.9% of the positive cases.

Country	No of enrolled cases	No of tested cases	Flu A			Flu B			Positivity rate
			Flu A: A(H1N1)pdm09	Flu A: seasonal H3N2	Flu A: Unsubtyped	B (Yamagata lineage)	B (Victoria lineage)	B (lineage not determined)	
Afghanistan	2 436	1 206	38	61	0	2	19	1	10.03
Bahrain	338	313	14	8	10	0	8	6	14.70
Egypt	11 877	11 877	379	138	0	0	0	150	5.62
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	4 426	4 426	25	3	93	0	0	586	15.97
Iraq	125 261	5 391	101	44	0	0	0	159	5.64
Jordan	1 010	1 010	42	29	4	0	0	23	9.70
Kuwait	4 365	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	4 381	4 381	145	188	0	0	0	36	8.42
Oman	3 062	2 522	60	31	42	0	6	15	6.11
Pakistan	165	165	6	7	0	0	0	0	7.88
Qatar	16 082	16 082	927	47	2 116	0	0	659	23.31
Saudi Arabia	4 864	1 353	228	0	146	0	0	132	37.40
Sudan	93	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
Syrian Arab Republic	160	135	1	0	56	0	0	4	45.19
Tunisia	773	773	220	12	1	0	0	72	39.46
United Arab Emirates	1 473	1 471	84	27	0	0	13	59	12.44
Yemen	447	443	63	8	0	0	0	5	17.16
Grand Total	182 542	54 158	2 463	779	2 599	2	200	2 012	14.87

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

Source of data: FluNet and EMFLU

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