

October - December 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 **October and December 2020**, 15 countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region reported data to FluNet and/or EMFLU. Out of 69 977 enrolled cases, 12.6% were tested during this period (8790 specimens). This represents a slight increase in the number of specimens tested as compared to the previous three months, when 7% of cases (4552 specimens) were tested out of 64 149 enrolled cases. Out of the 8790 processed specimens, 83 (0.9%) tested positive for seasonal influenza viruses, with all positive specimens reported from 7 countries.

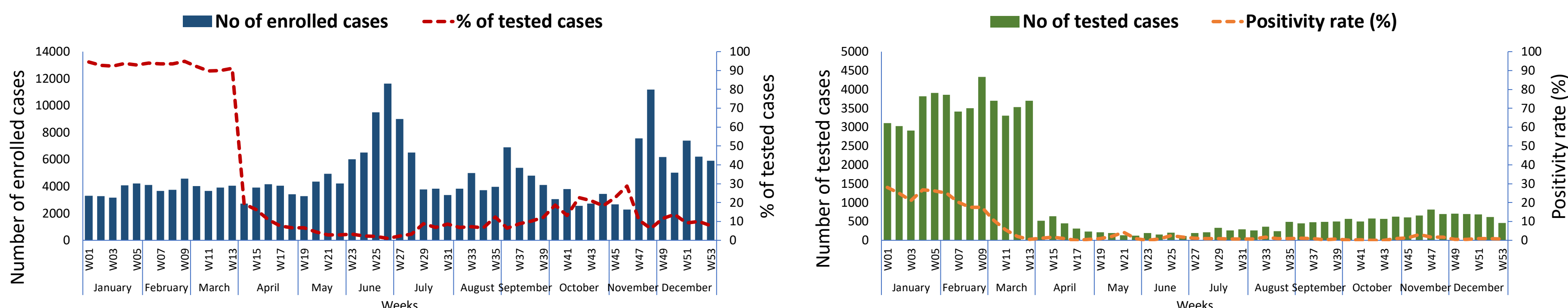


Fig 1. Number of enrolled cases and percentage of tested cases per week

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

In the previous month of **September**, A(H1N1)pdm09 was attributed to 62% of the positive cases, while A(H3) was the least reported subtype (15%). In contrast, the influenza virus subtype predominantly reported in **October** was B (lineage not determined) (45%), while the A(H1N1)pdm09 was attributed to 11% of positive cases. In **November**, B (lineage not determined) was detected the most (53%), while in **December**, the most detected subtype was B (lineage not determined) (67%).

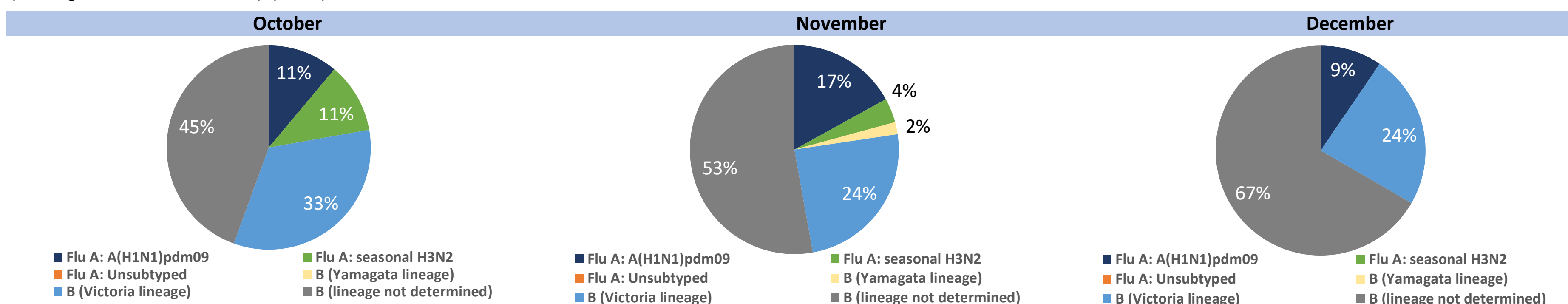


Fig 3. Circulating influenza viruses by sub-type

Between **January and December 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 62 948 processed specimens during this year, 8138 (12.93%) tested positive for seasonal influenza viruses. The highest positivity rates were recorded in Tunisia (35.63%) and Lebanon (31.66%). Of the positive specimens, 5 856 (71.96%) were influenza A viruses, including 2 475 (30.4%) influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 viruses, 782 (9.6%) influenza A(H3) viruses and 2 599 (31.9%) influenza A (Unsubtyped) viruses. Influenza B (lineage not determined) viruses accounted for 24.3% 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 | 3 385 | 2 155 | 38 | 61 | 0 | 3 | 39 | 1 | 6.59 |
| Bahrain | 342 | 317 | 14 | 8 | 10 | 0 | 8 | 6 | 14.51 |
| Egypt | 13 186 | 13 186 | 387 | 140 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 157 | 5.19 |
| Iran (Islamic Republic of) | 5 362 | 5 362 | 26 | 3 | 93 | 0 | 0 | 590 | 13.28 |
| Iraq | 183 520 | 5 591 | 102 | 44 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 159 | 5.46 |
| Jordan | 1 382 | 1 382 | 42 | 29 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 23 | 7.09 |
| Kuwait | 4 804 | 1 273 | 9 | 15 | 131 | 0 | 0 | 63 | 17.12 |
| Lebanon | 929 | 919 | 86 | 40 | 0 | 0 | 154 | 11 | 31.66 |
| 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 | 4 662 | 4 113 | 60 | 32 | 42 | 0 | 6 | 17 | 3.82 |
| Pakistan | 165 | 165 | 6 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7.88 |
| Qatar | 17 994 | 17 994 | 927 | 47 | 2 116 | 0 | 0 | 659 | 20.83 |
| Saudi Arabia | 8 024 | 1 833 | 230 | 0 | 146 | 0 | 0 | 165 | 29.51 |
| Sudan | 184 | 109 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.00 |
| Syrian Arab Republic | 404 | 379 | 1 | 0 | 56 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 16.09 |
| Tunisia | 856 | 856 | 220 | 12 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 72 | 35.63 |
| United Arab Emirates | 1 728 | 1 726 | 84 | 27 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 59 | 10.66 |
| Yemen | 447 | 443 | 63 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 17.16 |
| Grand Total | 252 519 | 62 948 | 2 475 | 782 | 2 599 | 3 | 221 | 2 058 | 12.93 |

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

Source of data: FluNet and EMFLU

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