

INFLUENZA MONTHLY UPDATE

February 2023 - Epidemiological weeks: 5-8, 2023

Key highlights

- In February 2023, 19 out of 21 countries with a functional influenza sentinel surveillance system in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) reported influenza data to FluNet and/or EMFLU (Afghanistan, Bahrain, Egypt, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen).
- The number of influenza positive cases has stabilized in the past 4 weeks after a steady decline for the greater part of the current influenza season. A similar trend is also evident for the influenza positivity rate, which is currently steady at 10% (Figure 1).
- In the current analytical period (epidemiological week 27, 2022 to week 8, 2023), there was a 16% increase in the number of cases enrolled (190 255 cases) compared to the previous reporting period (163 794 cases). Out of the 190 255 cases enrolled in the current reporting period, 186 507 (98%) were tested and, out of those, 31 601 (17%) were influenza positive (Table).
- Influenza positivity rate in the Region has consistently decreased over the past 4 months. During February 2023, 22 826 cases were enrolled, of which 21 264 specimens were tested for influenza (93%), of which 2192 specimens (10%) were positive (Figure 1).
- Influenza positivity rates varied across countries; from 3% in Egypt to 31% in Qatar, based on 200 or more specimens tested over the reporting month.
- Influenza type A remains the dominant circulating type of influenza in the EMR (63%). Of the total specimens that tested positive for influenza (2192) in February 2023, 603 (28%) were influenza B (lineage not determined), 496 (23%) were A(H3), 465 (21%) were influenza A (not sub-typed), 409 were influenza type A (H1N1) pdm09, and 219 (10%) were influenza B (Victoria lineage) (Figure 2).

Fig 1. Number of specimens by influenza virus subtypes/lineages and percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza viruses in the Region from week 27, 2018 to week 8, 2023

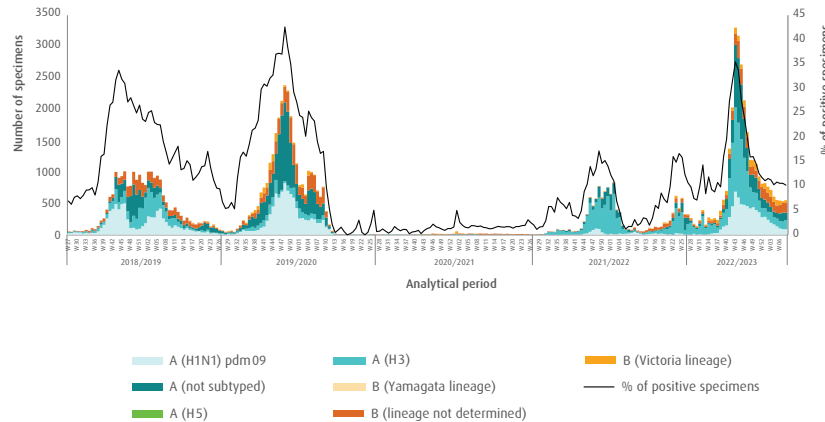
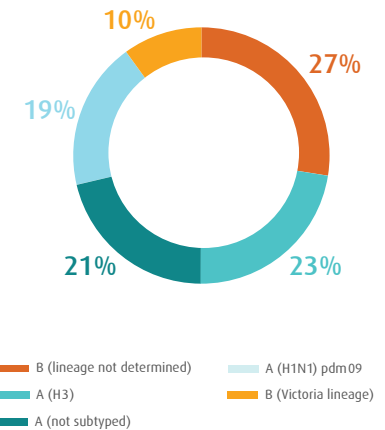


Fig 2. Proportion of influenza types and subtypes/lineages, EMR, February 2023



Map. Influenza positivity rate and detected influenza types and subtypes by country, EMR, February 2023

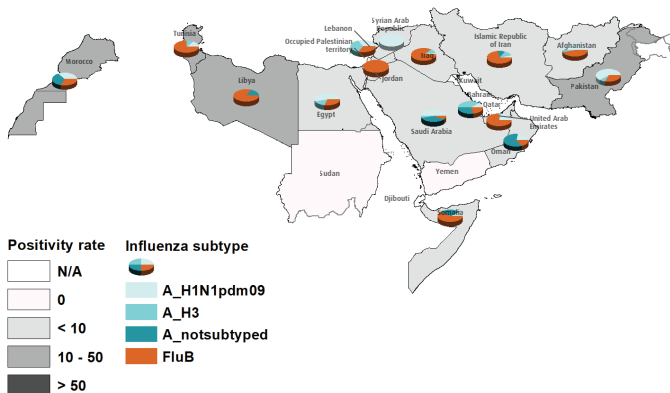


Table. Reported cumulative cases by country in the Region during the analytical period week 27, 2022 to week 8, 2023

| Transmission zone | Country | Number of enrolled cases | Number of tested cases (%) | Number of positive cases (%) | Flu A (%) | | | | Number of flu B cases (%) |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| | | | | | A (H1N1)pdm09 | A (H3) | A (H5) | A (not subtyped) | |
| Eastern Africa | Somalia | 2417 | 2388 (99) | 127 (5) | 2 (0) | 2 (0) | 0 (0) | 16 (1) | 107 (4) |
| Northern Africa | Egypt | 18365 | 18365 (100) | 2135 (12) | 542 (3) | 1375 (7) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 218 (1) |
| | Libya | 399 | 384 (96) | 141 (37) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 114 (30) | 27 (7) |
| | Morocco | 1385 | 1385 (100) | 397 (29) | 101 (7) | 27 (2) | 0 (0) | 54 (4) | 215 (16) |
| | Sudan | 327 | 318 (97) | 4 (1) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 3 (1) | 1 (0) |
| | Tunisia | 2278 | 2278 (100) | 584 (26) | 264 (12) | 137 (6) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 183 (8) |
| Southern Asia | Afghanistan | 2858 | 2858 (100) | 279 (10) | 211 (7) | 12 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 56 (2) |
| | Iran (Islamic Republic of) | 71023 | 71023 (100) | 11442 (16) | 997 (1) | 4886 (7) | 0 (0) | 4305 (6) | 1254 (2) |
| | Pakistan | 13861 | 13620 (98) | 1691 (12) | 1067 (8) | 139 (1) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 485 (4) |
| Western Asia | Bahrain | 16013 | 15967 (100) | 2897 (18) | 293 (2) | 1890 (12) | 0 (0) | 234 (1) | 480 (3) |
| | Iraq | 2874 | 2874 (100) | 624 (22) | 327 (11) | 23 (1) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 274 (10) |
| | Jordan | 3215 | 3215 (100) | 170 (5) | 114 (4) | 37 (1) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 19 (1) |
| | Lebanon | 1448 | 1424 (98) | 141 (10) | 46 (3) | 86 (6) | 0 (0) | 7 (0) | 2 (0) |
| | occupied Palestinian territory | 1532 | 1532 (100) | 458 (30) | 292 (19) | 3 (0) | 0 (0) | 144 (9) | 19 (1) |
| | Oman | 5745 | 5711 (99) | 964 (17) | 118 (2) | 288 (5) | 0 (0) | 192 (3) | 366 (6) |
| | Qatar | 21662 | 21662 (100) | 6462 (30) | 1977 (9) | 1101 (5) | 0 (0) | 1590 (7) | 1794 (8) |
| | Saudi Arabia | 14702 | 13209 (90) | 1637 (12) | 279 (2) | 23 (0) | 0 (0) | 392 (3) | 943 (7) |
| | Syrian Arab Republic | 612 | 151 (25) | 28 (19) | 28 (19) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) |
| | United Arab Emirates | 9399 | 8038 (86) | 1420 (18) | 365 (5) | 694 (9) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 361 (4) |
| | Yemen | 140 | 105 (75) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) |
| Total | | 190255 | 186507 (98) | 31601 (17) | 7023 (4) | 10723 (6) | 0 (0) | 7051 (4) | 6804 (4) |

For any queries about this bulletin, please contact: emrgoihp@who.int