

INFLUENZA MONTHLY UPDATE

March 2023 - Epidemiological weeks: 9–13, 2023

Key highlights

- In March 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, Egypt, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, occupied Palestinian territory, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen).
- The number of influenza-positive cases in the EMR has declined in the current influenza season (2022–2023), after an initial spike in the number of cases early in the current influenza season (Figure 1).
- In the current analytical period (epidemiological week 27, 2022 to week 13, 2023), there was a 16% increase in the number of cases enrolled (220 082) compared to the previous reporting period (190 255 cases- in epidemiological week 27, 2022 to week 8, 2023). Out of the 220 082 cases enrolled in the current reporting period, 216 608 (98%) were tested and, out of those, 34 363 (16%) were influenza positive (Table).
- There has been a consistent decline in the influenza positivity rate in the Region over the past four months. In March 2023, 27 368 cases were enrolled, of which 27 099 specimens were tested for influenza (99%), of which 2227 specimens (8%) were positive (Figure 1).
- Influenza positivity rates varied across countries; from <1% in Lebanon to 22% in Qatar, based on 200 or more specimens tested over the reporting month.
- In March 2023, influenza type A remained the dominant circulating type of influenza in the EMR (56%). Of the total specimens tested positive for influenza (2227), 801 (36%) were influenza B (lineage not determined), 490 (22%) were A(H3), 464 (21%) were influenza A (not subtyped), 302 (14%) were influenza type A (H1N1) pdm09, and 170 (8%) were influenza B (Victoria lineage) (Figure 2).

Figure 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 13, 2023

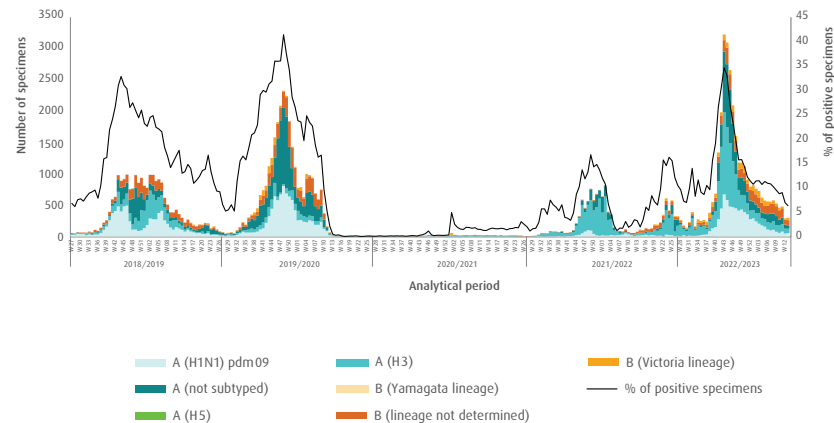
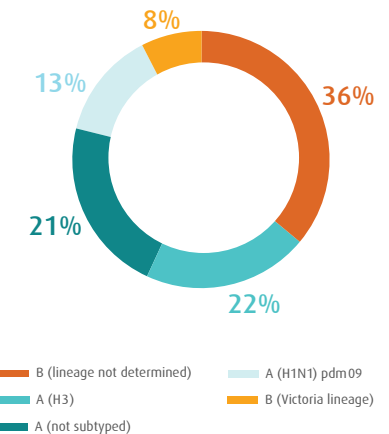


Figure 2. Proportion of influenza types and subtypes/lineages, EMR, March 2023



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

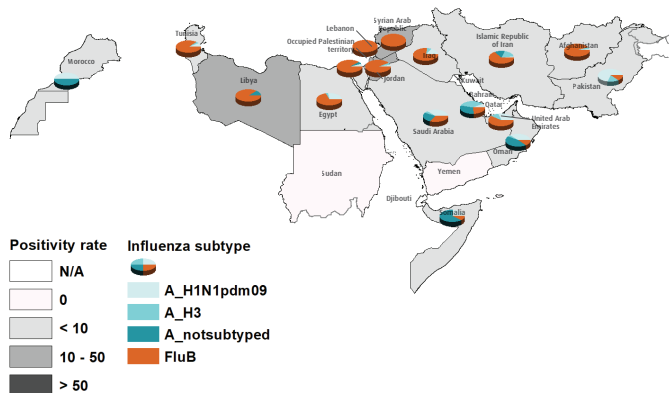


Table. Reported cumulative cases by country in the Region during the analytical period week 27, 2022 to week 13, 2023

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	2681	2679 (100)	150 (6)	8 (0)	2 (0)	0 (0)	31 (1)	109 (4)
Northern Africa	Egypt	20818	20818 (100)	2263 (11)	603 (3)	1390 (7)	0 (0)	0 (0)	270 (1)
	Libya	506	491 (97)	160 (33)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	117 (24)	43 (9)
	Morocco	1574	1574 (100)	469 (30)	102 (6)	27 (2)	0 (0)	64 (4)	276 (18)
	Sudan	383	379 (99)	5 (1)	1 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (1)	1 (0)
Southern Asia	Tunisia	2730	2730 (100)	609 (22)	266 (10)	138 (5)	0 (0)	0 (0)	205 (8)
	Afghanistan	3262	3262 (100)	315 (10)	213 (7)	12 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	90 (3)
	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	83920	83920 (100)	12077 (14)	1010 (1)	4996 (6)	0 (0)	4414 (5)	1657 (2)
	Pakistan	15202	15202 (100)	1754 (12)	1111 (7)	151 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	492 (3)
Western Asia	Bahrain	16013	15978 (100)	2897 (18)	293 (2)	1890 (12)	0 (0)	234 (1)	480 (3)
	Iraq	3301	3301 (100)	637 (19)	329 (10)	24 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	284 (9)
	Jordan	3998	3998 (100)	253 (6)	120 (3)	40 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	93 (2)
	Lebanon	1711	1711 (100)	143 (8)	46 (3)	86 (5)	0 (0)	7 (0)	4 (0)
	occupied Palestinian territory	2325	2325 (100)	593 (26)	300 (13)	4 (0)	0 (0)	151 (6)	138 (6)
	Oman	6642	6642 (100)	990 (15)	128 (2)	289 (4)	0 (0)	204 (3)	369 (6)
	Qatar	25670	25670 (100)	7330 (29)	2045 (8)	1434 (6)	0 (0)	1858 (7)	1993 (8)
	Saudi Arabia	18000	16260 (90)	2138 (13)	416 (3)	35 (0)	0 (0)	482 (3)	1205 (7)
	Syrian Arab Republic	675	220 (33)	40 (18)	28 (13)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	12 (5)
	United Arab Emirates	10509	9322 (89)	1540 (17)	400 (4)	707 (8)	0 (0)	0 (0)	433 (5)
	Yemen	162	126 (78)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
	Total	220082	216608 (98)	34363 (16)	7419 (3)	11225 (5)	0 (0)	7565 (3)	8154 (4)

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