

# INFLUENZA MONTHLY UPDATE

May 2023 - Epidemiological weeks: 18–22, 2023



World Health Organization  
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE Eastern Mediterranean



## Key highlights

- In May 2023, 18 out of 20 countries with a functional influenza 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, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, occupied Palestinian territory, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen).
- The trend of influenza-positive cases in the EMR remains downward after an initial sharp rise early in the influenza season 2022–2023 (Figure 1).
- In the current analytical period (epidemiological week 27, 2022 to week 22, 2023), there was a 10% increase in the number of cases enrolled (262 143) compared to the previous reporting period (239 292 cases in epidemiological week 27, 2022 to week 17, 2023). Out of the 262 143 cases, 257 871 (98%) were tested and, out of those, 36 459 (14%) were influenza positive (Table).
- In May 2023, 19 664 cases were enrolled, of which 19 425 specimens were tested for influenza (99%), of which 1000 specimens (5%) were positive.
- Influenza positivity rates varied across countries; from <1% in Afghanistan and Pakistan to 12% in Somalia, based on 200 or more specimens tested during May 2023.
- Of the specimens that tested positive, influenza type B was slightly higher than influenza type A (56% compared to 44%), unlike the previous months when influenza type A was the dominant circulating type in the EMR.
- Of the total specimens that tested positive for influenza (1000), 483 (48%) were influenza B (lineage not determined), 240 (24%) were A (H1N1) pdm09, 130 (13%) were influenza A (not subtyped), 75 (8%) were influenza type A (H3), and 72 (7%) were influenza B (Victoria lineage) (Figure 2 and Map).

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 22, 2023

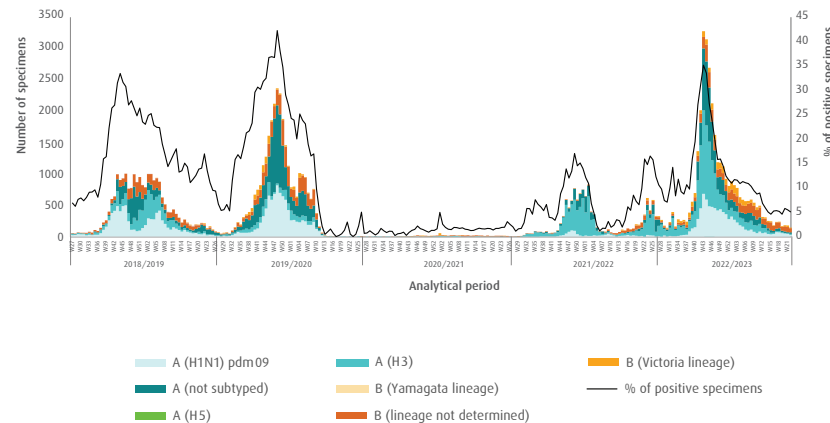
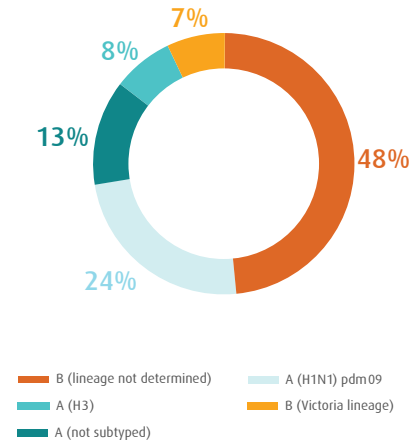


Fig 2. Proportion of influenza types and subtypes/lineages, EMR, May 2023



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

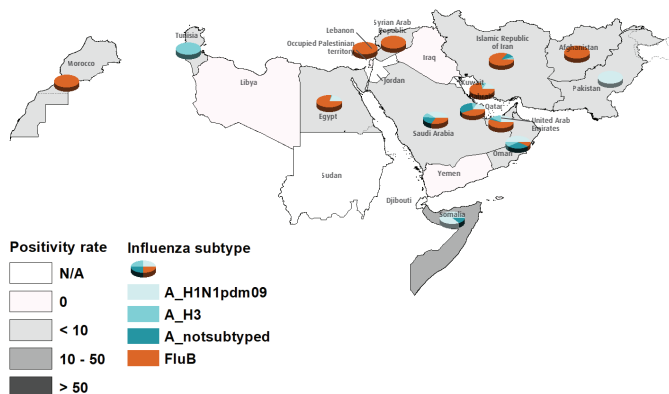


Table. Reported cumulative cases by country in the Region during the analytical period week 27, 2022 to week 22, 2023

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	3438	3418 (99)	247 (7)	96 (3)	2 (0)	0 (0)	39 (1)	110 (3)
Northern Africa	Egypt	25041	25041 (100)	2501 (10)	654 (3)	1402 (6)	0 (0)	0 (0)	445 (2)
	Libya	554	538 (97)	162 (30)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	117 (22)	45 (8)
	Morocco	1856	1825 (98)	422 (23)	103 (6)	27 (1)	0 (0)	73 (4)	219 (12)
	Sudan	383	379 (99)	5 (1)	1 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (1)	1 (0)
	Tunisia	3072	3072 (100)	610 (20)	266 (9)	139 (5)	0 (0)	0 (0)	205 (7)
Southern Asia	Afghanistan	3743	3743 (100)	305 (8)	215 (6)	12 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	78 (2)
	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	98599	98599 (100)	12714 (13)	1019 (1)	5062 (5)	0 (0)	4506 (5)	2127 (2)
	Pakistan	16242	16001 (99)	1762 (11)	1116 (7)	154 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	492 (3)
Western Asia	Bahrain	18044	18032 (100)	3090 (17)	385 (2)	1907 (11)	0 (0)	234 (1)	564 (3)
	Iraq	3566	3566 (100)	637 (18)	329 (9)	24 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	284 (8)
	Jordan	3998	3998 (100)	253 (6)	120 (3)	40 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	93 (2)
	Lebanon	2019	1995 (99)	151 (8)	47 (2)	86 (4)	0 (0)	7 (0)	11 (1)
	occupied Palestinian territory	2586	2586 (100)	602 (23)	300 (12)	4 (0)	0 (0)	151 (6)	147 (6)
	Oman	7705	7659 (99)	1017 (13)	145 (2)	291 (4)	0 (0)	208 (3)	373 (5)
	Qatar	29318	29318 (100)	7566 (26)	2077 (7)	1466 (5)	0 (0)	1920 (7)	2103 (7)
	Saudi Arabia	23262	21254 (91)	2531 (12)	563 (3)	71 (0)	0 (0)	553 (3)	1344 (6)
	Syrian Arab Republic	738	275 (37)	44 (16)	28 (10)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	16 (6)
	United Arab Emirates	17778	16417 (92)	1840 (11)	495 (3)	746 (5)	0 (0)	20 (0)	579 (4)
	Yemen	201	155 (77)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>262143</b>	<b>257871 (98)</b>	<b>36459 (14)</b>	<b>7959 (3)</b>	<b>11433 (4)</b>	<b>0 (0)</b>	<b>7831 (3)</b>	<b>9236 (4)</b>

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