

MENA INFLUENZA STAKEHOLDERS NETWORK NEWS LETTER

December 5, 2014

MENA News

Since the first meeting at 5th ESWI Influenza Conference in RIGA in September 2014, some countries have already started activities regarding influenza awareness. In this issue of this news letter you will find influenza activities conducted in Egypt, Iran and Algeria as well as recent information on influenza activity in the world and in MENA region.



Egypt

In the beginning of November 2014, a national influenza campaign titled "together against flu" was conducted in Egypt with the leadership of our MENA Stakeholder Network member Prof. Dr. Hisham Tarraf in collaboration with MoH, and a number

of national scientific societies including pediatrics, internal medicine, diabetes, respiratory and cardiovascular specialties. The activity was largely covered by media and supported by Sanofi Pasteur.



Iran

A country level Influenza Stakeholder Network, Iranian Physicians Working on Influenza (IPWI) was established in Iran. IPWI has already selected a very nice logo for their group. The group held their first meeting on November 20th, 2014 in Tehran. The meeting was chaired by one of our MENA Influenza Stakeholder Members from Iran, Dr. Masoud Mardani, Professor at Iran Medical University, Infectious Diseases Department, who is an expert on influenza in Iran.



Specialists from different scientific medical disciplines such as pediatrics, virology, internal medicine, general practice, pulmonology and endocrinology and representatives from Sanofi Pasteur attended the meeting. During the meeting, Dr. Mardani delivered a presentation on the importance of influenza in Iran and Dr. Tamer Pehlivan gave a presentation on the importance of “Influenza Stakeholder Network” in MENA Region.

An estimated 5 million diabetics are present in Iran. Influenza vaccine is provided to health care professionals every year and influenza vaccines are recommended for the following groups:

1. Healthy persons over 50 years of age
2. Healthy children 6 months to 6 years of age,
3. Health care professionals
4. Persons in close contact with high-risk groups such as HIV positive people, patients with end stage renal disease (ESRD), patients with cardiovascular disease and patients with chronic pulmonary disease



First IPWI Meeting, Nov 20th, 2014, Tehran



Algeria

In Algeria, Flu Vaccine Advisory Board held a meeting in May, 2014. During the meeting several topics including Influenza virus epidemiology, flu symptoms, burden of disease in COPD/Asthma patients, influenza vaccination in Algeria were covered.

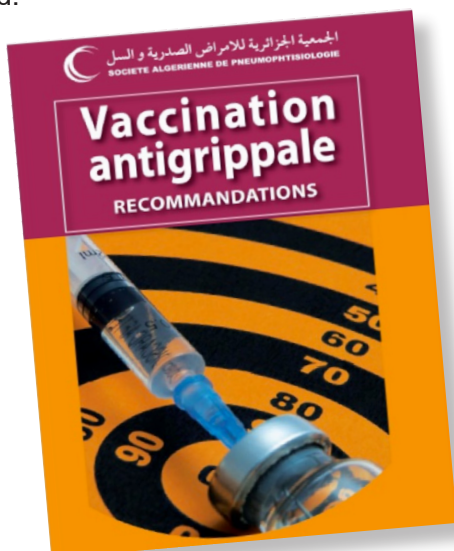
The meeting ended with a workshop session on:

- identification of at risk patients
- steps should be taken for increasing the utilization of vaccines to protect these patients.

At the end of the meeting vaccine recommended groups were determined.



Algerian Influenza Advisory Board Meeting (Top) and the booklet published by the advisory group on Influenza and influenza vaccination (Left)



After comments and propositions the advisory board members agreed to finalize and print the recommendation in a book format. The Algerian Society of Pneumology will distribute the recommendations to all medical societies including diabetology, cardiology, internal medicine, HCPs and health authorities

Influenza Vaccine Recommended Main Groups in Algeria are:

1. Pregnant women.
2. Family Neighborhood of infant less than 6 month
3. Infants and children over 6 months with chronic disease.
4. Heart and non-cyanotic heart disease with and without heart failure.
5. Chronic respiratory failure.
6. COPD
7. Moderate and severe asthma
8. Chronic interstitial pneumonia
9. Chronic kidney disease with or without chronic renal failure including dialysis patient
10. Chronic liver disease with or without hepatic cirrhosis
11. Chronic gastrointestinal disease, celiac disease, Crohn's disease, hemorrhagic colitis
12. Hematologic disease: severe anemia, sickle cell disease, thalassemia
13. Autoimmune Diseases.
14. Cancers.
15. Diabetes.
16. Obesity with BMI > 30.
17. Pilgrims
18. Healthcare workers
19. Communities employees

Other Groups

■ We should encourage vaccination of persons providing services in critical community that services and ongoing operations are the less disturbed possible during annual epidemics.

■ Employees communities including healthy adults on the market work, should consider vaccination

against seasonal influenza annually because it was established to help reduce absenteeism due to influenza and its complications.

■ Influenza vaccination provides benefits to both health workers and patients in their care. In the absence of counter-indications, it is recommended for health workers to be vaccinated.

Influenza News

United States- CDC <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/>

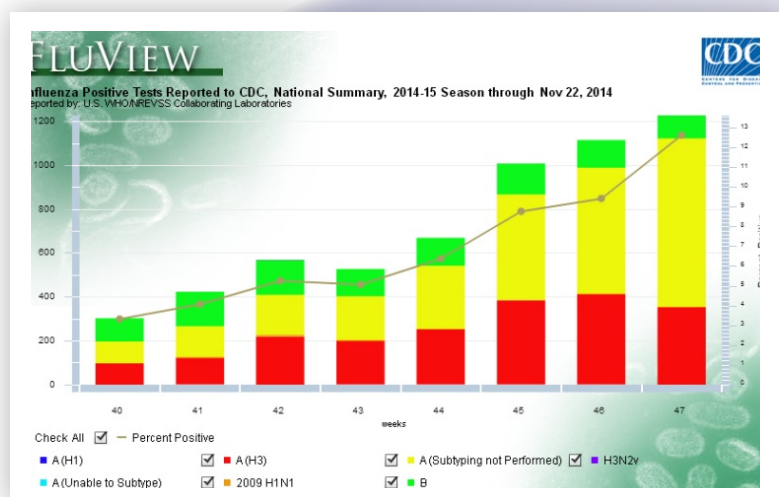
Synopsis

During week 47 (November 16-22, 2014), influenza activity **increased slightly** in the United States.

■ **Viral Surveillance:** Of 9,710 specimens tested and reported by U.S. World Health Organization (WHO) and National Respiratory and Enteric Virus Surveillance System (NREVSS) collaborating laboratories during week 47 and 1,228 (12.6%) were positive for influenza.

■ **Pneumonia and Influenza Mortality:** The proportion of deaths attributed to pneumonia and influenza (P&I) was below the epidemic threshold.

■ **Influenza-associated Pediatric Deaths:** Four influenza-associated pediatric deaths were reported.

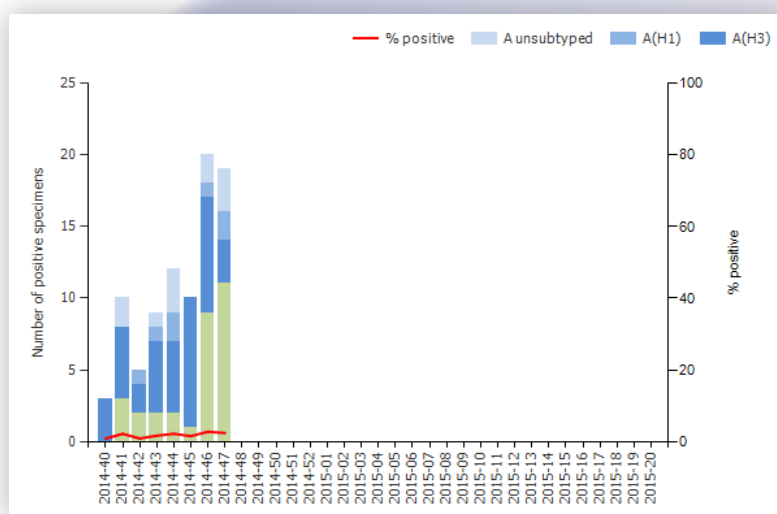


Week 47/2014 Summary

- In week 47/2014, influenza activity remained low across the WHO European Region.
- Sixteen countries reported sporadic influenza activity and six reported increasing trends in consultations for influenza-like illness (ILI) and acute respiratory infection (ARI).
- Of the 760 sentinel ILI and ARI specimens tested across 33 countries, only 20 (3%) from eight countries tested positive for influenza virus. Currently circulating viruses include A (H1N1) pdm09, A (H3N2) and influenza B viruses.
- The number of hospitalized laboratory-confirmed cases remained low and stable, with two countries reporting four such cases for week 47/2014. Three of the four were admitted to intensive care units.

2014-2015 Season Summary

- Although sporadic influenza virus detections are being reported in an increasing number of countries, there is no indication that the influenza season has started in the Region, which is normal for this time of year.
- No indications of increased mortality due to influenza have been reported through the European monitoring of excess mortality for public health action project (EuroMOMO – <http://www.euromomo.eu>).



FluNet (WHO) Reports for Selected MENA Region Countries

http://www.who.int/influenza/gisrs_laboratory/updates/summaryreport/en/

Several countries from MENA region report to FluNet.

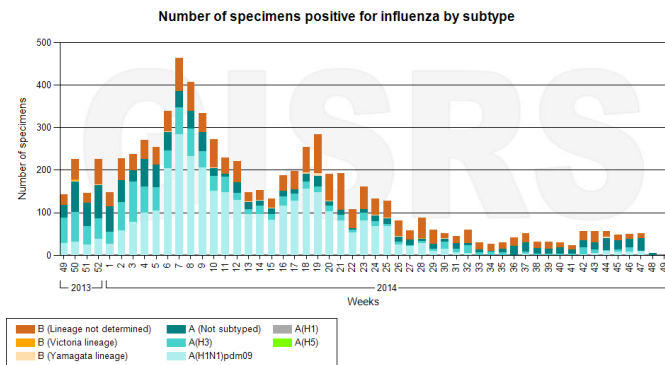
- A total of 47 countries report to WHO AFRO region including Algeria.
- A total of 16 countries report to WHO EMRO region which includes Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, KSA, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, UAE and Yemen.

Below are the graphs available from FluNet showing influenza positivity of the tested specimens.

As the graphs show, no virus detections have reported in some countries such as Morocco as of week 47. However, virus detections have started for countries like Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Tunisia, Qatar and Oman. Iraq has not reported virus detections other than a single detection in week 43.

Since it is very early in the season it is not possible to tell which influenza virus will dominate the season. However according to data available, Influenza A (H1N1) pdm09, A (H3N2) and B viruses are in circulation in both AFRO and EMRO regions.

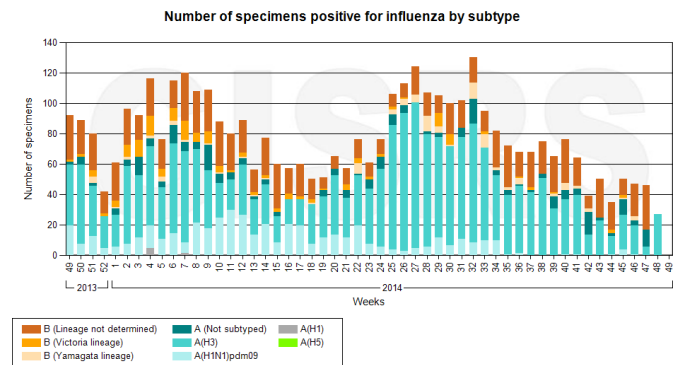
Eastern Mediterranean Region of WHO



Data source: FluNet (www.who.int/flunet), GISRS

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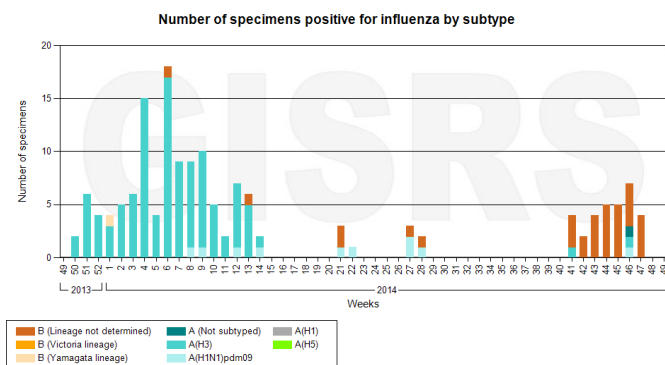
African Region of WHO



Data source: FluNet (www.who.int/flunet), GISRS

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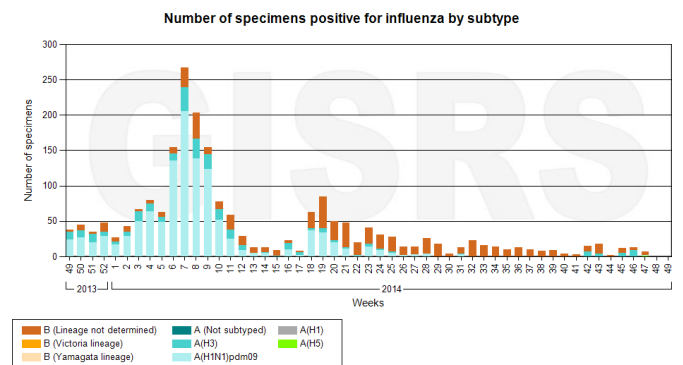
Algeria



Data source: FluNet (www.who.int/flunet), GISRS

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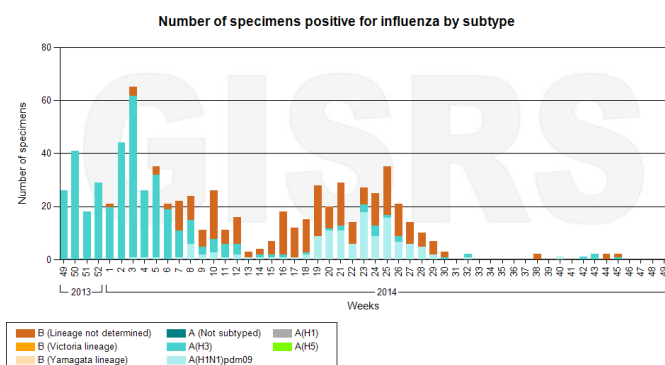
Egypt



Data source: FluNet (www.who.int/flu-net), GISRS

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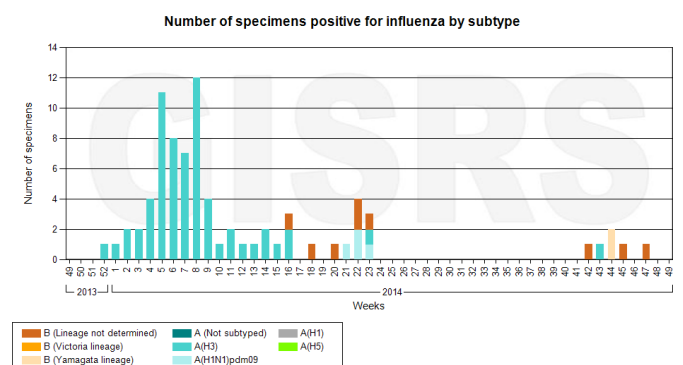
Iran (Islamic Republic of)



Data source: FluNet (www.who.int/flunet), GISRS

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Tunisia

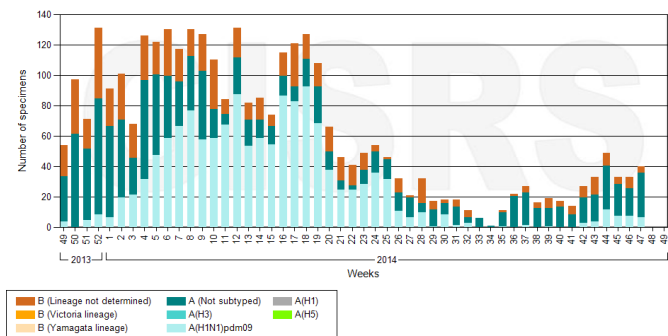


Data source: FluNet (www.who.int/flu-net), GISRS

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Qatar

Number of specimens positive for influenza by subtype

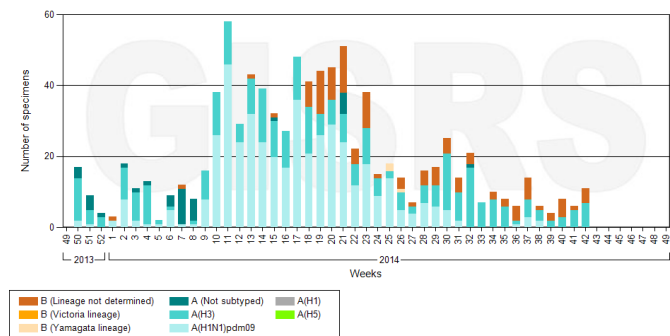


Data source: FluNet (www.who.int/flu/). GISRS

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Oman

Number of specimens positive for influenza by subtype



Data source: FluNet (www.who.int/flu/). GISRS

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