



Epidemiological Surveillance of Respiratory Infections

Weekly overview

Week 48/2024 (25/11/2024 – 1/12/2024)

Influenza-like Illness (ILI)

- The number of influenza cases per 1,000 visits shows an increasing trend.

Severe Acute Respiratory Illness- SARI (ILI)

- The number of SARI cases per 1,000 visits is low.

SARS-CoV2 virus - COVID-19 infection

- Test positivity from all tests performed in the country (COVID-19 REGISTRY data) showed a slight decrease compared to last week.
- The number of new admissions decreased compared to last week. 577 COVID-19 admissions were recorded, while the average weekly number of new admissions during the previous four weeks was 558.
- 6 new intubations were recorded. The average weekly number of new intubations during the previous four weeks was 12.
- The current number of intubated patients with COVID-19 infection is 26.
- 24 deaths were recorded. The average weekly number of deaths during the previous four weeks was also 24. Since the beginning of the year, recorded deaths among severe cases (intubated and/or with ICU hospitalization) is 313.
- As of 27/9, KP.3 was classified by the ECDC/WHO EURO as a Variant of Interest, while XEC was classified as Variant Under Monitoring. The dominant variant in the country is KP.3, whereas the first XEC variants were detected in week 33/2024. XEC shows an increasing trend. These variants have not been associated with an increased risk of severe disease.
- At the national level, the weighted viral load in urban wastewater is at low levels compared to historical data, showing no remarkable change compared to last week. In one of the nine monitored areas, viral load levels in urban wastewater appear increased (increased compared to last week), moderate in one (decreased compared to last week), whereas in the remaining areas it is low.

Influenza virus

- Influenza positivity in the community (as assessed by Sentinel surveillance in primary health care (ILI specimens) shows an increasing trend. No positive samples were detected from the SARI surveillance network.
- There were no new ICU laboratory-confirmed influenza cases, nor deaths from laboratory-confirmed influenza. In total, from week 40/2023 to week 48/2024 three severe cases of laboratory-confirmed influenza were admitted to ICU and one death was recorded. Since the beginning of the year, recorded deaths in severe cases with laboratory confirmed influenza is 62.
- From week 40/2024 to week 47/2024, among 902 samples (Sentinel Primary Health Care Surveillance, SARI surveillance and hospitals outside surveillance networks) ten positive samples for influenza viruses were found, 9 type A and 1 type B. Among the type A samples, two were A(H3) and seven were A(H1)pdm09.

Respiratory syncytial virus – RSV

- All samples were tested negative in both sentinel primary health care (ILI specimens) and hospitals (SARI specimens).
- Both influenza and COVID-19 are associated with a significant number of deaths among severe cases. It is recommended that persons who qualify for vaccination, particularly those at higher risk of severe outcomes (elderly and people with underlying diseases) should get vaccinated against both diseases.