



Epidemiological Surveillance of Respiratory Infections

Weekly overview

Week 49/2024 (02/11/2024 – 08/12/2024)

Influenza-like Illness (ILI)

- The number of influenza cases per 1,000 visits shows an overall increasing trend, with a small decrease compared to last week.

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) remained at the same level compared to last week.
- The number of new admissions slightly increased compared to last week. 632 COVID-19 admissions were recorded, while the average weekly number of new admissions during the previous four weeks was 565.
- 11 new intubations were recorded. The average weekly number of new intubations during the previous four weeks was 9.
- The current number of intubated patients with COVID-19 infection is 21.
- 28 deaths were recorded. The average weekly number of deaths during the previous four weeks was also 27. Since the beginning of the year, recorded deaths among severe cases (intubated and/or with ICU hospitalization) is 322.
- 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 medium levels compared to historical data, showing a slight increase compared to last week. In one of the ten monitored areas, viral load levels in urban wastewater appear increased (with no significant change compared to last week), moderate in three (increased in one of them 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) is above the limit that indicates the beginning of the activity of seasonal influenza (10%), keeping its increasing trend. Positivity of SARI specimens shows also an increasing trend.
- Two new ICU laboratory-confirmed influenza cases were recorded. In total, from week 40/2023 to week 49/2024, five 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 49/2024, among 1.005 samples (Sentinel Primary Health Care Surveillance, SARI surveillance and hospitals outside surveillance networks), 20 (2%) positive samples for influenza viruses were found, 19 type A and 1 type B.
- Among the 19 type A samples, 5 (26%) were A(H3) and 14 (74%) 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.