

European Respiratory Virus Surveillance Summary (ERVISS)

WHO European Region Summary, Week 41/2023 (ending 15th October 2023)

Overall statement

- Rates of influenza-like illness and/or acute respiratory infection are elevated above baseline levels in 8 of 50 countries or areas of the WHO European Region reporting data in week 41.
- Compared to week 40, influenza activity remains at low levels, RSV activity continues to increase and SARS-CoV-2 activity remains elevated.
- SARI hospital admissions are at a similar low level to last year, with SARS-CoV-2 explaining the majority of cases. Influenza and RSV detections in secondary care remain at low levels.

Respiratory virus activity

- Rates of influenza-like illness are elevated above baseline in 6 countries (Azerbaijan, Denmark, Greece, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Serbia) and rates of acute respiratory infection are elevated in 3 countries (Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Russian Federation).
- Across the Region, the percentage of all sentinel primary care specimens from patients presenting with ILI or ARI symptoms that tested positive for (Figure 1):
 - influenza remained below the 10% epidemic threshold and stable at 1% compared to the prior week.
 - SARS-CoV-2 remained stable and elevated at 12%, compared to the prior week.
 - RSV increased to 5% compared to 3% in the prior week.
- Of 35 reporting countries or areas, 10 of 35 reported low and 1 medium (Israel) influenza intensity (Map 1). Of 38 reporting countries or areas, 12 reported sporadic influenza activity within the country (Map 2).
- Confirmed influenza virus infection detections reported from sentinel primary care for the past two weeks (n=34) were mainly influenza type A viruses (91%; Table 1), a mix of A(H1N1)pdm09 (n=18) and A(H3N2) (n=7). These proportions were similar among non-sentinel sources.

- In five countries an increasing trend of RSV positivity from primary care sentinel source specimens was observed this week, with Serbia reaching 13% and United Kingdom (Scotland) 11%.
- From primary care sentinel sources, an increasing trend in SARS-CoV-2 detections was observed in three reporting countries (Belarus, Denmark and Germany).

Severity

- Based on sentinel secondary care data, SARI rates remained at similar levels to those observed in the same period last year. Of the 21 countries reporting age-based data, two countries (Ireland, Serbia) observed a noticeable increase in the 65 and above age group.
- In the past week, 12 countries reported at least 10 weekly sentinel SARI tests for influenza, RSV or SARS-CoV-2. Similar to the situation in sentinel primary care surveillance, pooled test positivity was highest for SARS-CoV-2 at 18% (median of country values 11%; range: 0%-32%) with increasing trends reported in three countries. There was a total of seven detections of RSV reported and five detections reported for seasonal influenza among a total of 842 tests.
- Among the SARI specimens, there were only five detected influenza viruses, of which four were subtype A(H1)pdm09 and one was type B (lineage unknown).
- Of 33 countries reporting data on non-sentinel COVID-19 hospital admissions or ICU indicators in the last year, ten reported an overall increasing trend in at least one of these indicators compared with the previous week. Although levels remain relatively low, increases in death rates for up to six weeks were reported in those aged 65 years and above by eight of the 21 countries reporting age-specific death data.
- There was evidence of recent increases in hospital admissions for RSV, mainly among those aged 0-4 years, in two (Ireland and Malta) of the five countries reporting data.
- Across the Region, the percentage of all specimens from patients presenting to sentinel SARI sites that tested positive for (Figure 2):
 - an influenza virus remained stable at 1% compared to 2% in the prior week
 - SARS-CoV-2 increased to 18% from 16% in the prior week
 - RSV remained stable at 1% compared to 2% in the prior week
- No countries or areas with more than ten specimens tested from sentinel SARI sources reported influenza virus positivity above 10% positivity.
- [EuroMOMO](#) pooled estimates of excess mortality from 25 European countries or sub-national regions are within expected levels. However, some countries in southern

Europe have reported elevated mortality over the recent weeks, which have coincided with observed heatwaves.

Virus characterization

Influenza

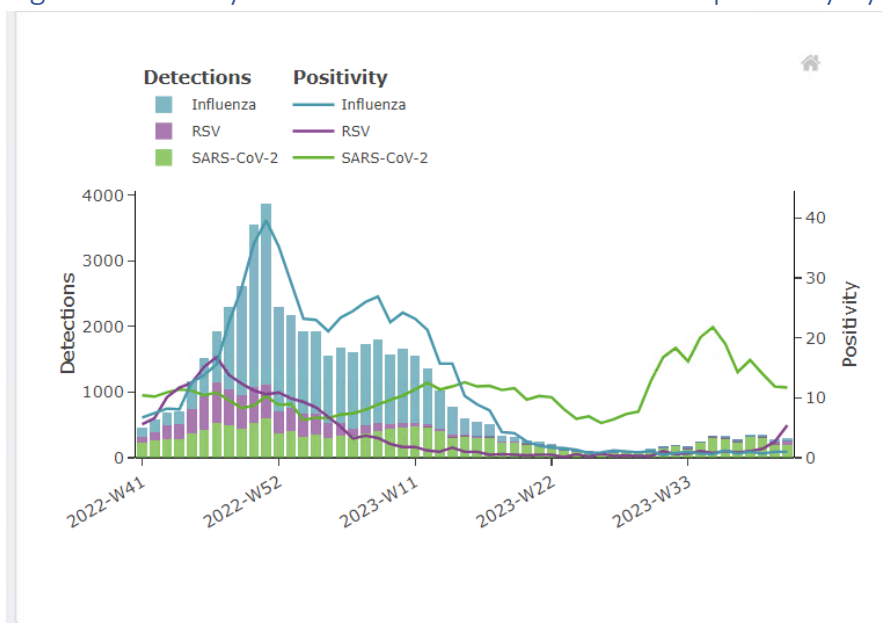
- No viruses were reported to have been genetically characterized so far for the 2023-2024 season.

SARS-CoV-2

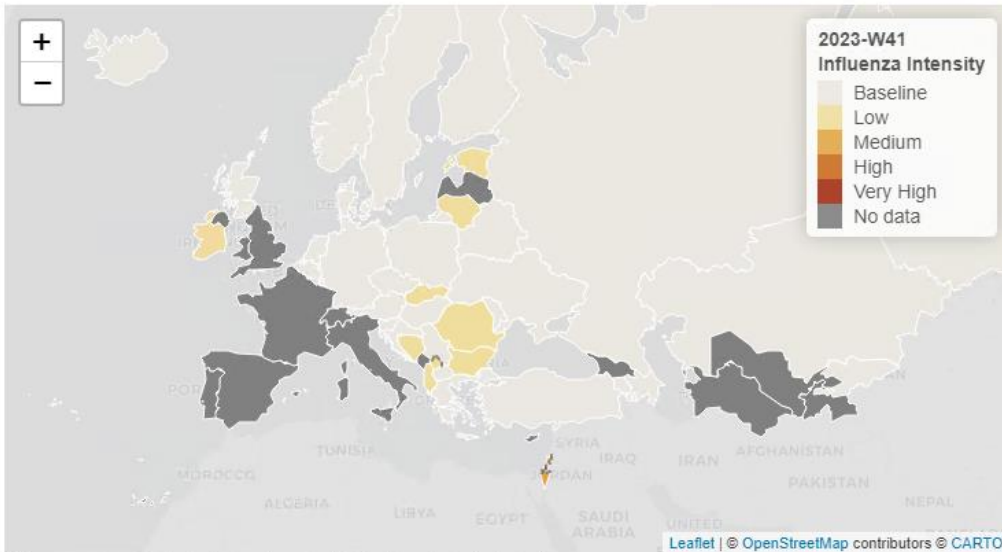
- Between weeks 39/2023 and 40/2023, 17 countries and areas reported sufficiently complete information to permit calculation of the relative frequency of specific variants. Among these countries and areas, the median (range) proportion of all nationally sequenced virus isolates detected, that were a current or former variant of concern or variant of interest, was:
 - XBB.1.5+F456L: 66.8% (36-82% from 17 countries or areas)
 - XBB.1.5: 26.6% (12-60% from 17 countries or areas)
 - BA.2.75: 1.6% (0-7.7% from 15 countries or areas)

See maps 3 & 4.

Figure 1. Primary care sentinel detections and test positivity by pathogen



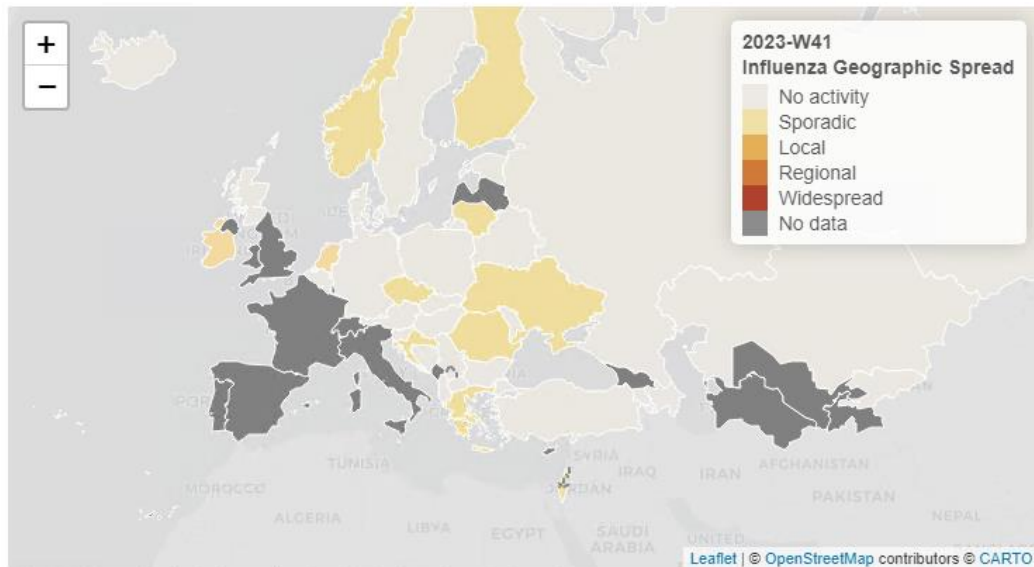
Map 1. Influenza intensity map, Week 41/2023



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Map 2. Influenza geographic spread, Week 41/2023



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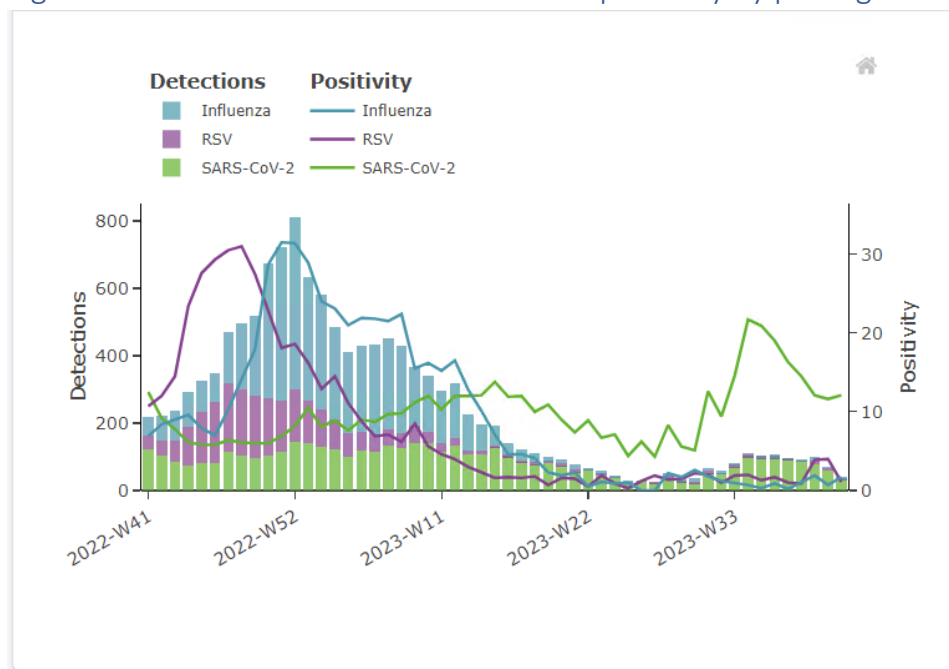
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Table 1. influenza virus, RSV and SARS-CoV-2 from primary care sentinel source specimens for week 41/2023 and cumulatively since week 40/2023

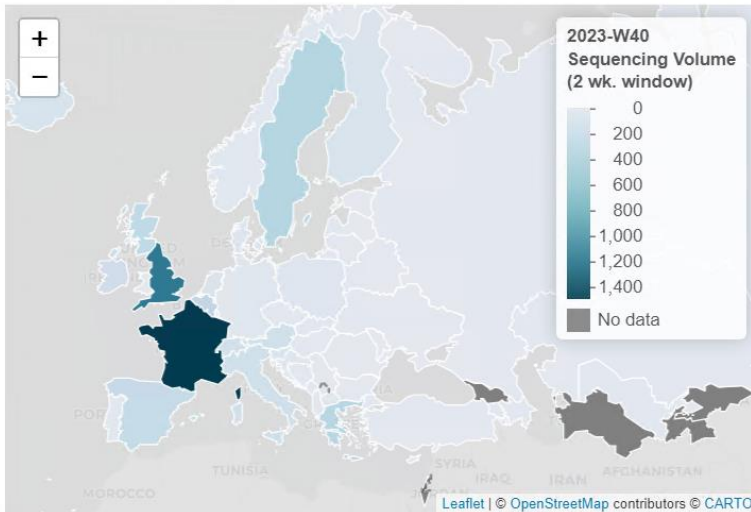
Pathogen	Reporting week (41/2023)		Current season (from week 40/2023)	
	Detections	Positivity %	Detections	Positivity %
Influenza	17	1%	34	<1%
Influenza A	16	94%	31	91%
A(H1)pdm09	7	64%	18	72%
A(H3)	4	36%	7	28%
A not subtyped	5		6	
Influenza B	1	6%	3	9%
B/Victoria lineage	0	-	0	-
B unknown lineage	0	-	0	-
RSV	68	5%	104	4%
SARS-CoV-2	193	12%	400	12%

For influenza type percentage calculations, the denominator is total detections; for subtype and lineage, it is total influenza A subtyped and total influenza B lineage determined, respectively; for total detections, it is total tested

Figure 2. SARI sentinel detections and test positivity by pathogen



Map 3. Volume of SARS-CoV-2 sequencing or genotyping, weeks 39/2023 to 40/2023

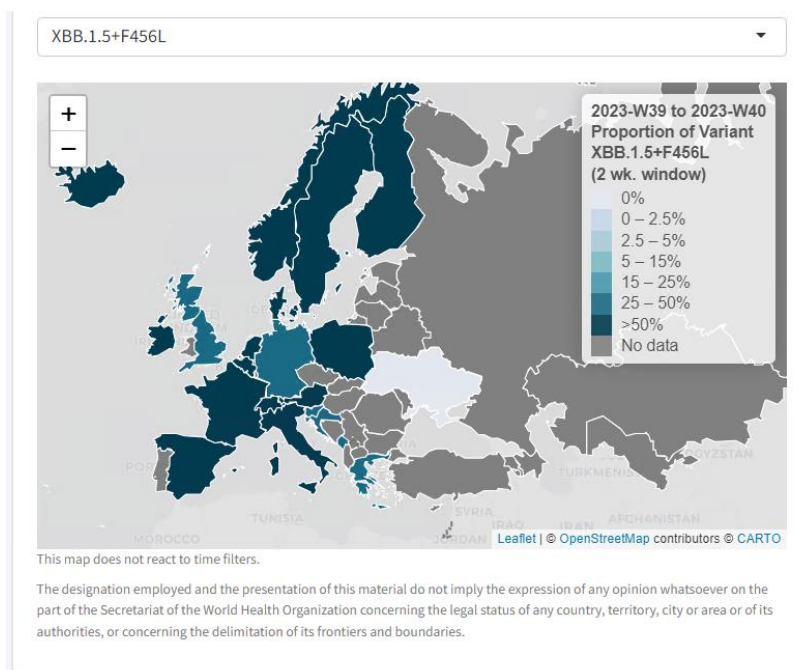


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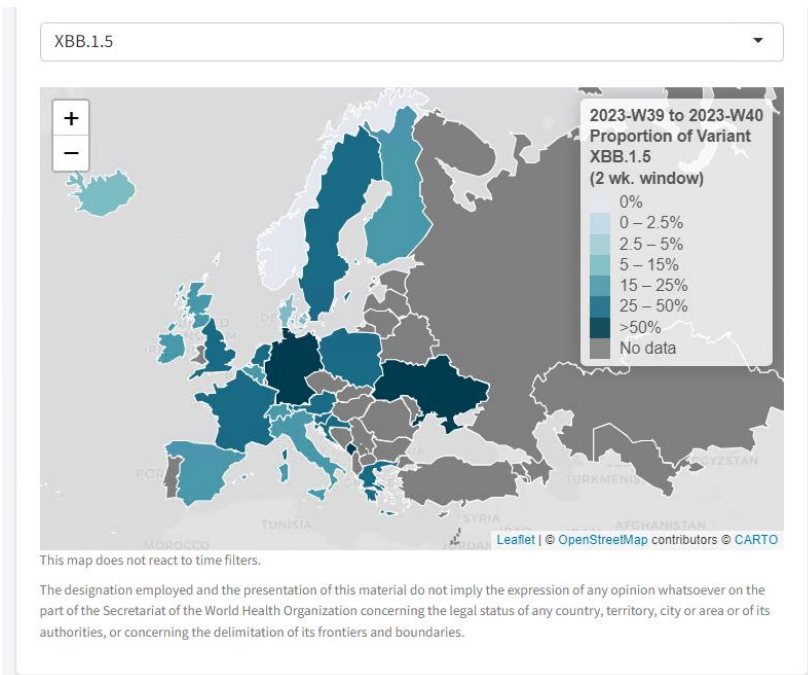
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Map 4. SARS-CoV-2 Variant proportion, weeks 39/2023 to 40/2023

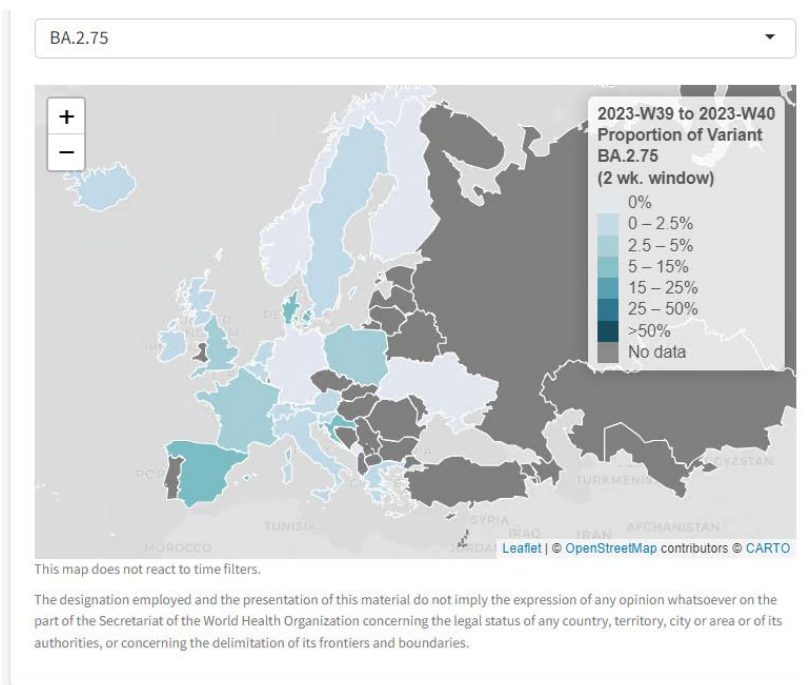
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