

FLU FOCUS

Information and resources on influenza in the WHO European Region



Issue No. 10, July 2014

Flu Focus is an e-newsletter published by the WHO Regional Office for Europe that covers recent developments, research, reports, materials, upcoming events and resources on influenza.

This issue of *Flu Focus* will be available shortly on the WHO Regional Office for Europe web site at <http://www.euro.who.int/flufocus> in both English and Russian.

Этот выпуск *Flu Focus* будет также вскоре помещен на сайте Европейского регионального бюро ВОЗ: <http://www.euro.who.int/flufocus> на английском и русском языках.

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FEATURES

[Study in Montenegro reveals low level of seasonal flu vaccination among health care workers](#)

Survey results showing unsatisfactory levels of seasonal flu vaccination among health care workers were presented at a workshop during European Immunization Week 2014 in Podgorica, Montenegro.

[Building capacity to respond to vaccine safety concerns](#)

This event, held in February 2014 in Astana, Kazakhstan, addressed the need to build Member States' ability to communicate effectively when real or perceived vaccine-related events occur. It was the first in a series of multi-country training workshops and participants came from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

[Orientation meeting, creating capacity to implement TIP](#)

Consultants from 8 countries attended a training workshop on 23–24 June 2014 on implementation of the WHO/Europe "Tailoring immunization programmes" (TIP) guide and related guides developed to

promote uptake of influenza vaccination (TIP Flu) and support the response to antimicrobial resistance (TAP).

SURVEILLANCE

[New version of the EuroFlu Bulletin](#)

The final issue of the EuroFlu Bulletin was published on 15 May 2014. Plans are in place for a replacement bulletin produced in conjunction with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), this is to be launched from October 2014. Enquiries can be directed to influenza@euro.who.int.

[50 Member States meet to discuss influenza surveillance](#)

National focal points for epidemiological and virological surveillance in the WHO European Region, reference laboratory representatives and involved international institutions met in Vienna, Austria, 11–13 June 2014 for the 4th Joint WHO/Europe and ECDC Annual European Influenza Surveillance Meeting.

LABORATORY

[New resources support lab quality management](#)

To help laboratories implement systems to manage quality control, WHO recently launched a suite of resources in several languages.

[New collaborating centre for laboratory strengthening – KIT Biomedical Research](#)

The Netherlands' KIT Biomedical Research is to become a WHO collaborating centre for laboratory strengthening for a period of four years starting in 2014. KIT stands for Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen, which means Royal Tropical Institute.

[Workshop on lab policy development in Uzbekistan](#)

WHO/Europe and the WHO Country Office in Uzbekistan have been providing support to the Ministry of Health of Uzbekistan on development of a national laboratory policy.

[Launch of training in laboratory management for influenza specialists](#)

An influenza laboratory management training course for 24 specialists from national influenza laboratories in selected eastern European countries was held in Istanbul, Turkey, 19–23 May 2014.

[Specialist training for virologists](#)

The WHO Collaborating Centre for Reference and Research on Influenza, at the National Institute for Medical Research, London, United Kingdom provided training to build capacity in monitoring influenza viruses, determining the impact of the influenza season and informing influenza vaccine strain selection.

[External quality assessment for National Influenza Centres](#)

ECDC has published the reports from the external quality assessment exercises for the rapid detection of influenza virus, its isolation, culture and influenza virus antiviral susceptibility testing. These were conducted by the European Reference Laboratory Network for Human Influenza (ERLI-Net) for National Influenza Centres (NICs) in the European Union.

WHO/Europe supported the distribution of panels to national influenza centres in the wider WHO European Region. Inactivated avian influenza A(H7N9) virus was also included and this provided the first opportunity to assess A(H7N9) detection capabilities across the WHO European Region. A regional report will be available in due course.

[Influenza antiviral susceptibility](#)

[Influenza virus detection, isolation and culture](#)

[Partners meet to discuss how better labs mean better outcomes for patients](#)

Some 60 participants met in Copenhagen at a two-day regional meeting to discuss strengthening laboratory capacities to support national programmes in eastern Europe and central Asia on 17 and 18 June.

INFLUENZA VACCINE

[2014–2015 influenza vaccine composition in the northern hemisphere](#)

The WHO Consultation and Information Meeting on the Composition of Influenza Virus Vaccines for the Northern Hemisphere 2014–2015 took place in the week beginning 17 February 2014 in Geneva, Switzerland.

PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

[Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus \(MERS-CoV\): situation update and cases reported in the Netherlands](#)

Since April 2012, and as of 16 May 2014, 614 laboratory-confirmed cases of human infection with Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) have been reported to WHO, including 181 deaths.

[Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus \(MERS-CoV\) update: Greece reports first case](#)

On 18 April 2014, the Ministry of Health in Greece reported one laboratory-confirmed case of infection with Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV).

[Brochure: Global solidarity. Addressing our health responsibilities for Pandemic Influenza Preparedness](#)

Pandemic viruses respect no borders. All countries, rich and poor, large and small, must work together to prepare for its onset and to respond effectively.

[Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework Meeting 8–10 July WHO/Europe](#)

This meeting marked the official launch of the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness (PIP) Framework Implementation Plan in Armenia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan – the 4 Member States selected for support in 2014.

RESOURCES

[EuroFlu – WHO/Europe influenza surveillance](#)

[Weekly Influenza Surveillance Overview \(WISO\) – ECDC](#)

[Global Epidemiological update](#)

[Global virological update](#)

WHO/Europe: [Influenza](#), [Vaccines and immunization](#)

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