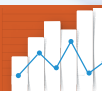


GISRS

INFLUENZA

SURVEILLANCE
COVID-19



Maintaining surveillance of influenza and monitoring SARS-CoV-2

adapting Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System
(GISRS) and sentinel systems during the COVID-19 pandemic

INTERIM GUIDANCE

8 NOVEMBER 2020



World Health
Organization

WHO/2019-nCoV/Adapting_GISRS/2020.1

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Suggested citation. Maintaining surveillance of influenza and monitoring SARS-CoV-2 – adapting Global Influenza surveillance and Response System (GISRS) and sentinel systems during the COVID-19 pandemic: Interim guidance. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2020 (WHO/2019-nCoV/Adapting_GISRS/2020.1). Licence: [CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/igo).

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Acknowledgements

WHO wishes to acknowledge the experts and country representatives who contributed to the development of the interim guidance before, during and after the WHO Consultation to Adapt Influenza Sentinel Surveillance Systems for Including COVID-19 held virtually from 6 to 8 October 2020.


Contribution is acknowledged from experts of the influenza/SARS-CoV-2 interface working groups. Experts of case definitions group include Luzhao Feng, Siri Hague, Jean-Michel Heraud, Gianfranco Spiteri, Sheena Sullivan, and Weigong Zhou. Experts of epidemiology considerations group include Cornelia Adlhoch, Yuzo Arima, Imad Cherkaoui, Cheryl Cohen, and Sonja Olsen. Experts of laboratory considerations group include Ian Barr, Eeva Broberg, Rodrigo Fasce, Erik Karlsson, Rebecca Kondor, Angeliki Melidou, Catherine Thompson, Dominic NC Tsang, Sylvie van der Werf, Xiyan Xu, and Thedi Ziegler.

Acknowledgements go to the following experts and institutions that contributed data in the pre-consultation workshop: Departamento de Epidemiología, de la División de Planificación Sanitaria del Ministerio de Salud de Chile, Hospitales Centinelas para la vigilancia de IRAG y el Instituto de Salud Pública, Chile; Ministerio de Salud de Costa Rica, INCIENSA, CCSS, Costa Rica; Ministerio de Salud Pública de Paraguay; Sibongile Walaza, Centre for Respiratory Diseases and Meningitis, National Institute for Communicable Diseases of the National Health Laboratory Service, South Africa; Andrew Hayward, Institute of Epidemiology and Health Care, University College London, UK; Thulani Ashcroft, Emma Gillette, Durga Kulkarni, and You Li, Usher Institute, University of Edinburgh, UK; Scott A. Nabity, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, USA.

Special thanks to the consultation chair, Rahman Mahmudur, and co-chairs, Ian Barr and Cheryl Cohen; to Thedi Ziegler and Shoshanna Goldin who served as meeting rapporteur and to all presenters and discussion leads.

The following WHO staff and consultants are gratefully acknowledged for their support in the preparation of the consultation and contributions to the development and finalization of the interim guidance: Abdinasir Abubakar, Maya Allan, Tomas John Allen, Amal Barakat, Silvia Bertagnolio, Paula Couto, Vanessa Cozza, Janet Diaz, Hien Doan, Amgad A. Elkholy, Julia Fitzner, Aspen Hammond, Siddhivinayak Shriram Hirve, Belinda L. Herring, Francis Inbanathan, Jorge Jara, Kazunobu Kojima, Frank Konings, Henry Laurenson-Schafer, Sandra Jackson, Juliana Leite, Maja Lievre, Bikram Maharjan, Awandha Mamahit, Marie-jo Medina, Ann Moen, Piers Andrew Nicholas Mook, Karen Nahapetyan, Richard Pebody, Dmitriy Pereyaslov, Anne Perrocheau, Angel Rodriguez, Magdi Samaan, Soe Soe Thwin, Katelijn A.H. Vandemaele, Andrea Vicari, Karen Von Eije, Pushpa Wijesinghe, and Wenqing Zhang.

The technical editing of this document was performed by Judith Ann Mandelbaum-Schmid.



The threat of influenza epidemics and pandemics persists. It is imperative for the GISRS to maintain meaningful surveillance of influenza worldwide and for countries to remain vigilant while adapting to meet COVID-19 surveillance objectives.

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Overview

This document is an update of the interim guidance entitled *Operational considerations for COVID-19 surveillance using GISRS*, published on 26 March 2020, and of the interim guidance *Preparing GISRS for the upcoming influenza seasons during the COVID-19 pandemic – practical considerations*, published on 26 May 2020. The document incorporates additional considerations for assessing and addressing disruptions in influenza sentinel surveillance systems and for extending influenza sentinel surveillance to COVID-19. It also includes the updated algorithms for surveillance testing of influenza and SARS-CoV-2, which would enable the monitoring of the potential co-circulation of these respiratory viruses during the upcoming influenza season 2020/2021 and the detection of co-infections with SARS-CoV-2 and influenza or other respiratory viruses. This version is based on the most recent published evidence and country lessons learnt for leveraging the Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS) for COVID-19 surveillance compiled before and during a virtual consultation in October 2020.

KEY POINTS

- The threat of influenza epidemics and pandemics persists. It is imperative for the GISRS to maintain meaningful surveillance of influenza worldwide and for countries to remain vigilant while adapting to meet COVID-19 surveillance objectives.
- Countries are advised to first assess and address disruptions to the influenza sentinel surveillance systems when implementing sentinel surveillance of COVID-19.
- Specimens from sentinel sites should be tested for both influenza and SARS-CoV-2 viruses. If possible, multiplex PCR assays for the simultaneous detection of influenza and SARS-CoV-2 viruses should be selected for efficient use of reagents, consumables and hands-on time.
- It is important to ship timely representative influenza viruses and/or clinical specimens from positive specimens to WHO Collaborating Centres, according to existing WHO guidance.
- Reporting of weekly aggregated sentinel surveillance is a critical component of surveillance.
- Despite its great challenges, the COVID-19 pandemic provides an opportunity to strengthen core surveillance capacities that can deliver public health benefits during and well beyond this emergency.



Despite its great challenges, the COVID-19 pandemic provides an opportunity to strengthen core surveillance capacities that can deliver public health benefits during and well beyond this

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