

Assessing and communicating the impact of SARS-CoV-2 on influenza activity: the FluCov EpiBulletin

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INTRODUCTION

- FluCov assesses the impact of SARS-CoV-2 and its prevention and control measures on the global circulation of influenza
- Epidemiological data on SARS-CoV-2 and influenza activity, as well as prevention and control measures applied, are being collated for 20 countries
- Information is presented monthly through the winter months via an EpiBulletin

METHODS

Scope

- June 2021 EpiBulletin : 11 countries (Canada, US, UK, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, China, Japan, India, Australia)
- September 2021 EpiBulletin: 20 countries (newly included: Mexico, Brazil, Netherlands, Poland, South Korea, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Israel)
- Years: 2019-2021

Data

- Influenza data (N cases, % positive tests): WHO FluNet [1]
- Sars-Cov-2 data (N cases, % positive tests): OurWorldinData [2]
- Control measures: Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker (OxCGRT) Stringency Index [3]

RESULTS

Collated data are plotted for each country and updated monthly. Figure 1 shows the number of positive influenza and SARS-CoV-2 cases (top plot) and the percentage of influenza and SARS-CoV-2 positive specimen (bottom plot) for France. The bar in the middle displays the Stringency Index over time. Table 1 shows the absolute numbers for France in September 2021.

Data sources

[1] WHO FluNet: <https://www.who.int/tools/flunet>

[2] Ritchie H, Ortiz-Ospina, E, Beltekian, D, Mathieu, E, Hasell J, Macdonald B. et al. Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19). <https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus>

[3] Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker, Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford. <https://www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/research/research-projects/covid-19-government-response-tracker>

RESULTS (CONTINUED)

June 2021 EpiBulletin

- In the majority of countries, the expected influenza peak during the 2020 (Southern Hemisphere) and 2020/21 (Northern Hemisphere) winters was not observed
- Only some influenza activity across the season in India and China
- The number of SARS-CoV-2 cases rose, most countries showed two peaks of SARS-CoV-2 in the second half of 2020

September 2021 EpiBulletin

- No influenza activity in the vast majority of countries, including Australia where no activity was detected during the typical Influenza epidemic season
- Clear influenza activity only detected in India (dominant virus: mix of influenza A (H3) and influenza B-Victoria) and China (dominant virus: influenza B-Victoria)
- Increase in SARS-CoV-2 cases in the majority of countries in the second half of 2021

All EpiBulletins are publicly released through: <https://bit.ly/EpiBulletin>

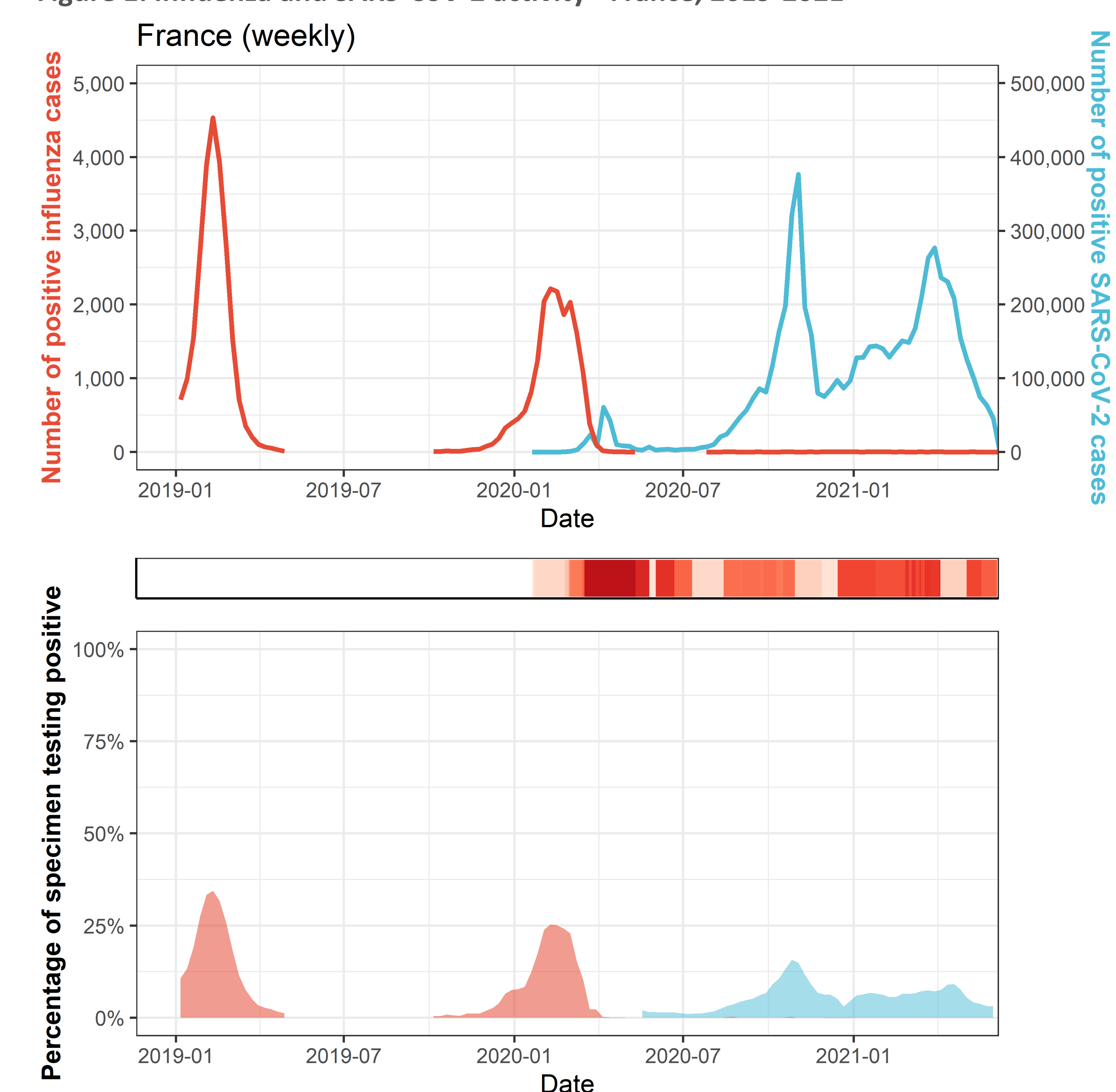
CONCLUSION

- The EpiBulletins show a global decline of influenza activity since the start of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic
- SARS-CoV-2 control measures (e.g. non-pharmaceutical interventions) have had direct effects on influenza outbreaks
- Many countries are currently loosening prevention and control measures, which may explain the overall increase in SARS-CoV-2 infections in the second half of 2021
- Upcoming monthly FluCov EpiBulletins will track the effect of loosening measures on influenza activity in the coming months

Table 1: Absolute numbers for France, September 2021

Country	Year	SARS-CoV-2 cases	Influenza cases
France	2019	-	25.405
	2020	2.677.660	16.589
	2021	4.715.055	20

Figure 1: Influenza and SARS-CoV-2 activity - France, 2019-2021



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<https://www.nivel.nl/en/fluCoV>

