

FluCov-Bulletin – July 2024

FluCov project: combining data from around the world to better understand the co-circulation of influenza and COVID-19

Commentary

Contents

The FluCov Bulletin offers a summary starting from January 2019, detailing the count of confirmed **influenza** and **SARS-CoV-2** detections, along with positivity rates of tested specimens, across 25 countries globally (see page 3).

Results

On a global level, **influenza** activity has further decreased in July, due to low activity in the Northern Hemisphere and decreasing activity in most Southern Hemisphere countries (see Figure 1). The following country patterns were observed for **influenza**:

- In the Southern Hemisphere, **influenza** activity decreased in **Argentina**, **Chile**, and **South Africa**. A slight increase in the percentage of specimens testing positive was reported in **South Africa** at the end of July, with predominantly detections of **influenza B**.
- **Influenza** activity increased in **Australia** and **New Zealand**, although the peak seems to have been passed in **Australia** and a downward trend in detections can be seen at the end of July. **Influenza A(H3N2)** was the predominant virus in both countries.
- In **Brazil**, **influenza** remained stable compared to June, at relatively low levels.
- In the Northern Hemisphere, an increase in **influenza A(H1N1)pdm09** activity was reported in **India** and **Thailand**, with the weekly percentage of positive tests increasing to 20% in **India** and 25% in **Thailand**, by the end of July [1].
- **Influenza** activity was stable at low levels in **Canada**, **Mexico** and all European countries covered by the bulletin (**France**, **Germany**, the **Netherlands**, **Poland**, **Spain**, and the **United Kingdom**).
- Continued low **influenza** activity was reported in **China**, **Egypt**, **Japan**, **Philippines**, **South Korea**, and **Vietnam**.
- No update on **influenza** activity was available for **Israel**, **Italy** and the **United States** in July.

Globally, **SARS-CoV-2** detections remain relatively low (see figure 1). The following patterns were observed for **SARS-CoV-2** in July 2024:

- **SARS-CoV-2** activity decreased in **Thailand**, after an increase in May and June.
- Increases in **SARS-CoV-2** activity were reported in **China**, **Mexico**, the **Netherlands**, **Poland** and the **United Kingdom**.
- **SARS-CoV-2** activity was low or decreasing in **Argentina**, **Canada**, **Chile**, **India**, **Italy**, **New Zealand** and **South Africa**.
- No update on **SARS-CoV-2** detections was available for **Australia**, **Brazil**, **Egypt**, **France**, **Germany**, **Israel**, **Japan**, **Philippines**, **South Korea**, **Spain**, **United States**, and **Vietnam** in July.

Implications

In the Southern Hemisphere, **influenza** activity has started to decrease in most Southern Hemisphere countries covered by the Bulletin: **Argentina**, **Chile**, **South Africa**, and most recently in **Australia** starting end of July. In **New Zealand**, however, **influenza** activity continued to increase. **Influenza A(H3N2)** was the predominant virus type in all Southern Hemisphere countries covered by the Bulletin except **South Africa**, where **influenza B/Victoria** replaced A(H1N1)pdm09 as the predominant virus type in July. This bimodal curve of **influenza A** and **B** is not uncommon and was already regularly seen before the COVID-19 pandemic [2]. It is of importance that the lineage of **influenza B** specimens continues to be determined, to understand whether **influenza B/Yamagata** has ceased circulating globally [3]. In the Northern Hemisphere, **influenza** activity remained low at interseasonal levels.

When looking at the 2023/24 **influenza** season in the **United States** and **Canada**, it seems that the peak timing in the percentage of **influenza**-positive cases was more comparable to the pre-pandemic average than the 2022/23 season, when the peak of **influenza** epidemics was earlier compared to the pre-pandemic period (1.9 months, globally) [4]. In **Argentina**, however, the 2024 peak was reached earlier than in 2023, a year that was more comparable to pre-pandemic timing. A comparative analysis of peak timing between seasons is necessary to identify when there is a return to pre-pandemic **influenza** patterns after the disruption caused by COVID-19, and caution is needed when drawing conclusions at this moment.

As of July 2024, **SARS-CoV-2** activity is relatively low in most countries included in the Bulletin. Small increases in **SARS-CoV-2** detections were reported in a number of Northern Hemisphere countries (**China**, **Mexico**, the **Netherlands**, **Poland**, and the **United Kingdom**). A decrease of **SARS-CoV-2** detections was reported in **Thailand**, the only country reporting a major increase in June. **Thailand's** peak in **SARS-CoV-2**, is now being followed by an increase in **influenza**, a pattern that was also seen before in other Northern and Southern hemisphere countries covered by the Bulletin.

One year following the WHO's declaration of the pandemic's end [5], countries have implemented varied approaches to monitoring **SARS-CoV-2**. These strategies presently encompass the reduction of surveillance activities and instances where surveillance data is not shared with the WHO. This variation in approaches impacts the completeness of data reported in the FluCov Bulletin.

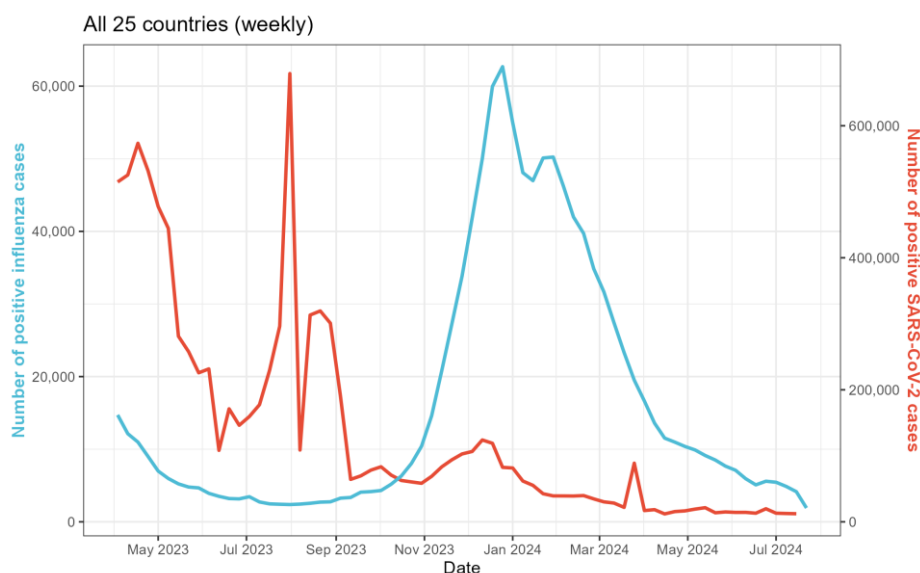


Figure 1: SARS-CoV-2 and influenza detections in the 25 countries covered by the Bulletin (period: from week 1/2023 to week 30/2024).

Disclaimer: Comparisons between countries and seasons of influenza and SARS-CoV-2 detections should be made with care, as national surveillance systems may differ (e.g. surveillance structures and testing intensity) and change over time.

Monthly plots by country

The plots per country show weekly data for **influenza** and of **SARS-CoV-2** infections from 1 January, 2023 up to 28 July, 2024. For real time figures starting from 1 January 2019, please visit the [FluCov Dashboard](#). This FluCov-Bulletin includes the countries Canada, United States, Mexico, Brazil, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Poland, South Africa, Egypt, China, Japan, South Korea, India, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Israel and Australia.

Per country, the first plot displays the number of positive **influenza** (in blue) and **SARS-CoV-2** (in red) detections. An overview of the absolute number of **influenza** and of **SARS-CoV-2** detections per country can be found on [pages 26-28 of this FluCov-Bulletin \(click here\)](#). The second plot shows the **influenza** detections by subtypes/lineages reported to FluNet. The third plot displays the percentage of specimens testing positive for **influenza** during the current season (in red), the last season, and the average of the two pre COVID-19 seasons (2017-18 and 2018-19).

The FluCov Dashboard is live!

All Figures and Tables in the FluCov-Bulletin can be accessed (real-time) at:

<https://www.nivel.nl/en/dossier-epidemiology-respiratory-viruses/flucov-dashboard>

Countries (click to view plot)

North America

[Canada](#)

[United States](#)

Central America Caribbean

[Mexico](#)

Tropical South America

[Brazil](#)

Temperate South America

[Argentina](#)

[Chile](#)

Northern Europe

[United Kingdom](#)

Eastern Europe

[Poland](#)

South West Europe

[France](#)

[Germany](#)

[Italy](#)

[Netherlands](#)

[Spain](#)

Northern Africa

[Egypt](#)

Southern Africa

[South Africa](#)

Eastern Asia

[China](#)

[Japan](#)

[South Korea](#)

Southern Asia

[India](#)

South East Asia

[Philippines](#)

[Thailand](#)

[Vietnam](#)

Western Asia

[Israel](#)

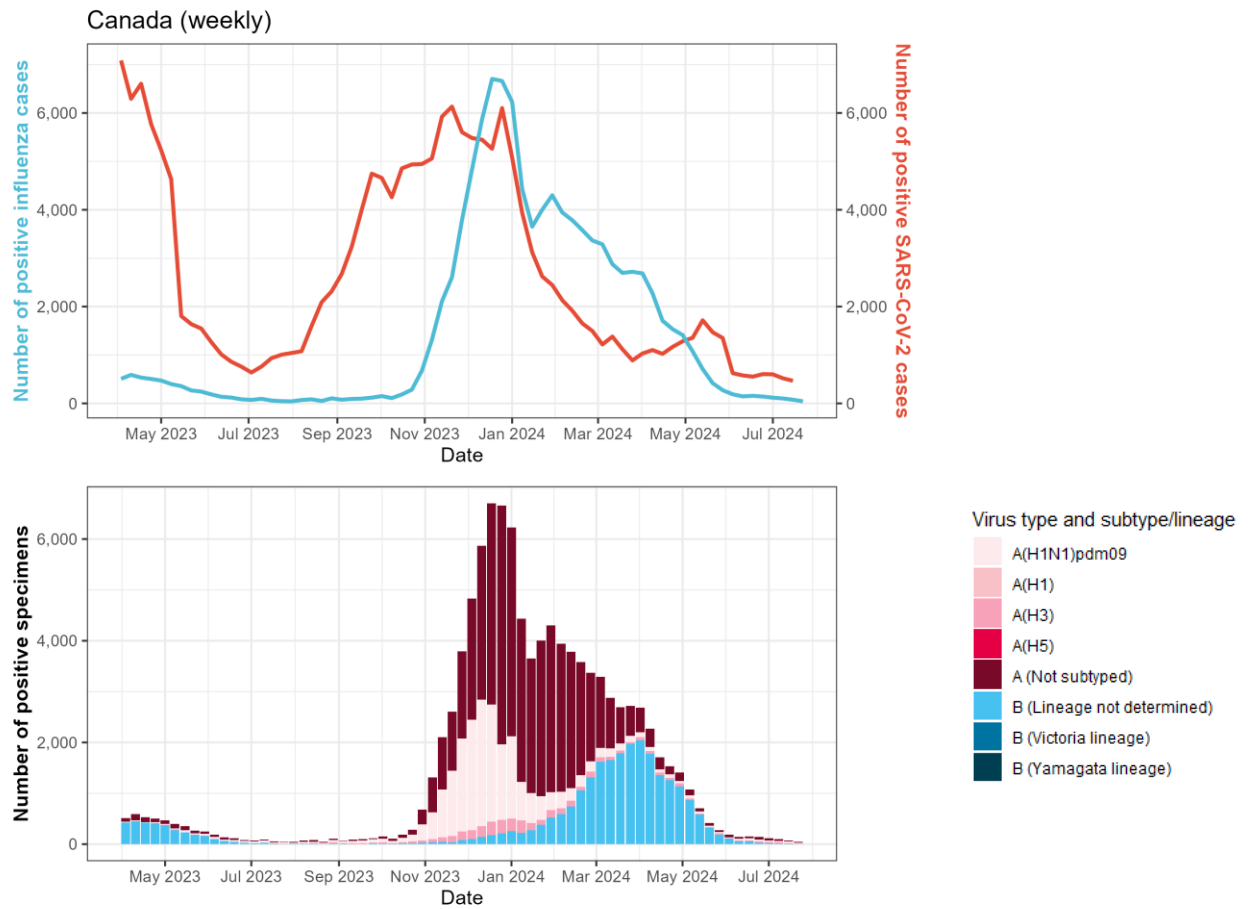
Oceania

[Australia](#)

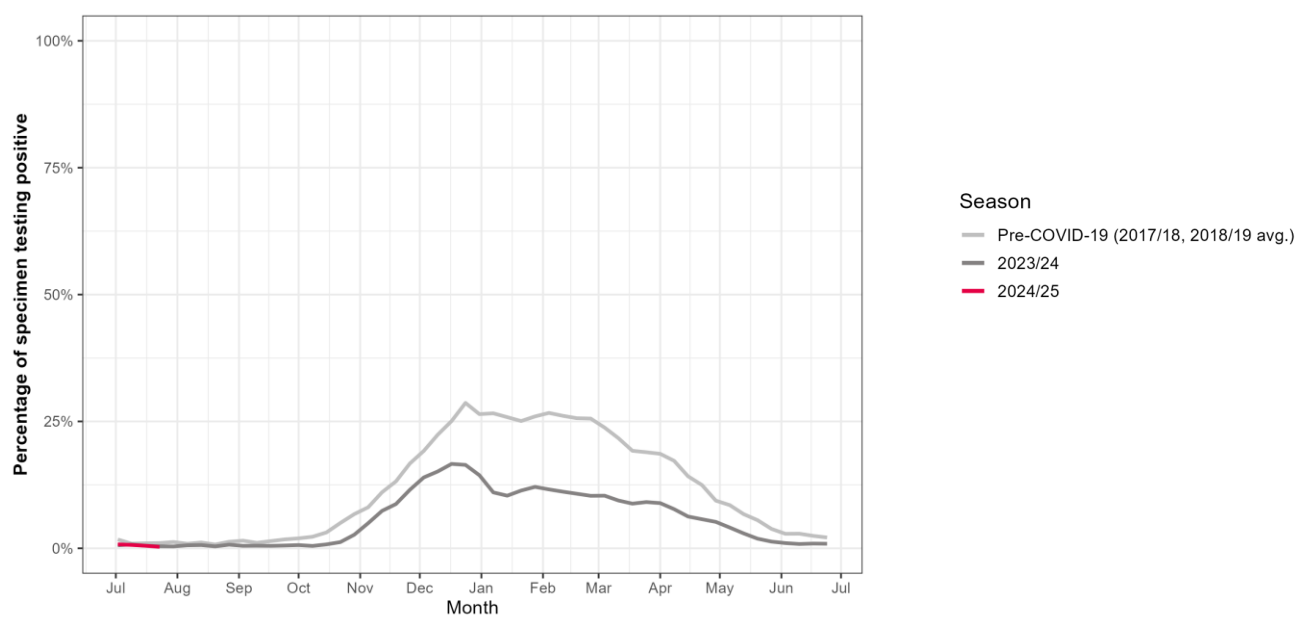
[New Zealand](#)

North America

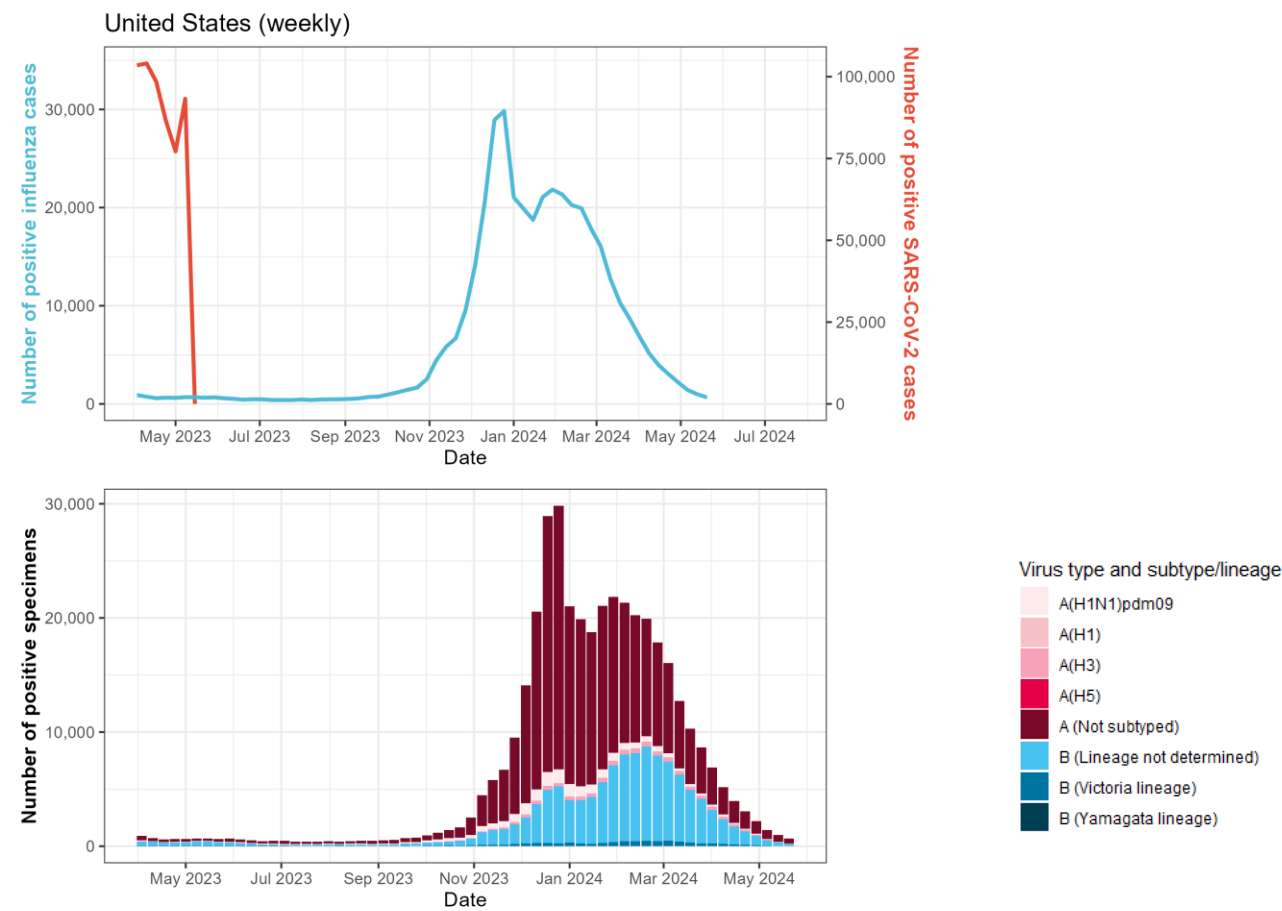
Canada



Percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza in different seasons

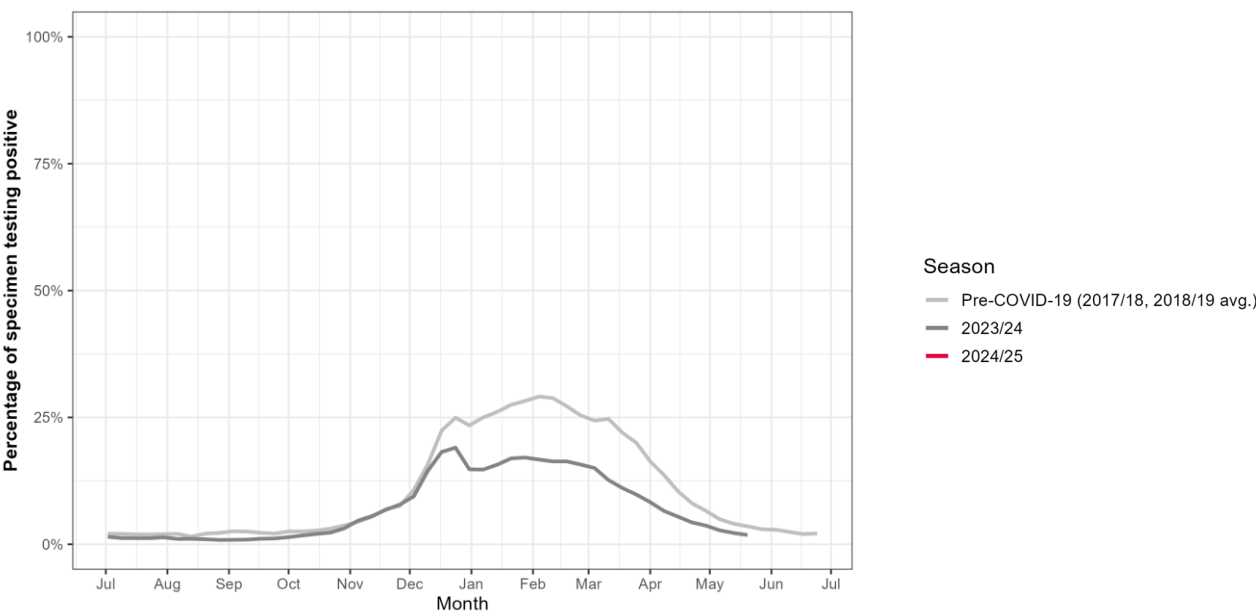


United States



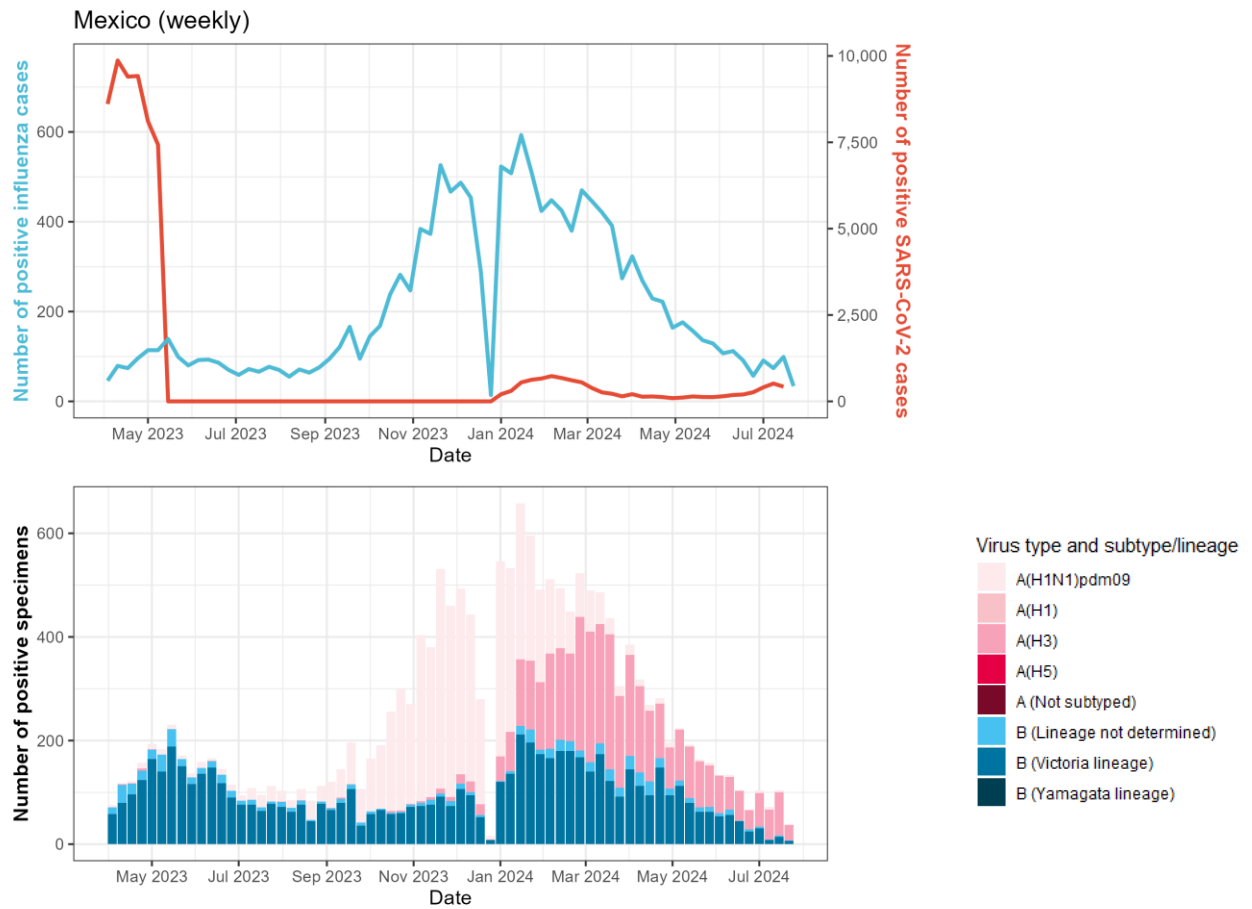
Note: The United States stopped reporting SARS-CoV-2 activity to the WHO since W20/2023

Percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza in different seasons

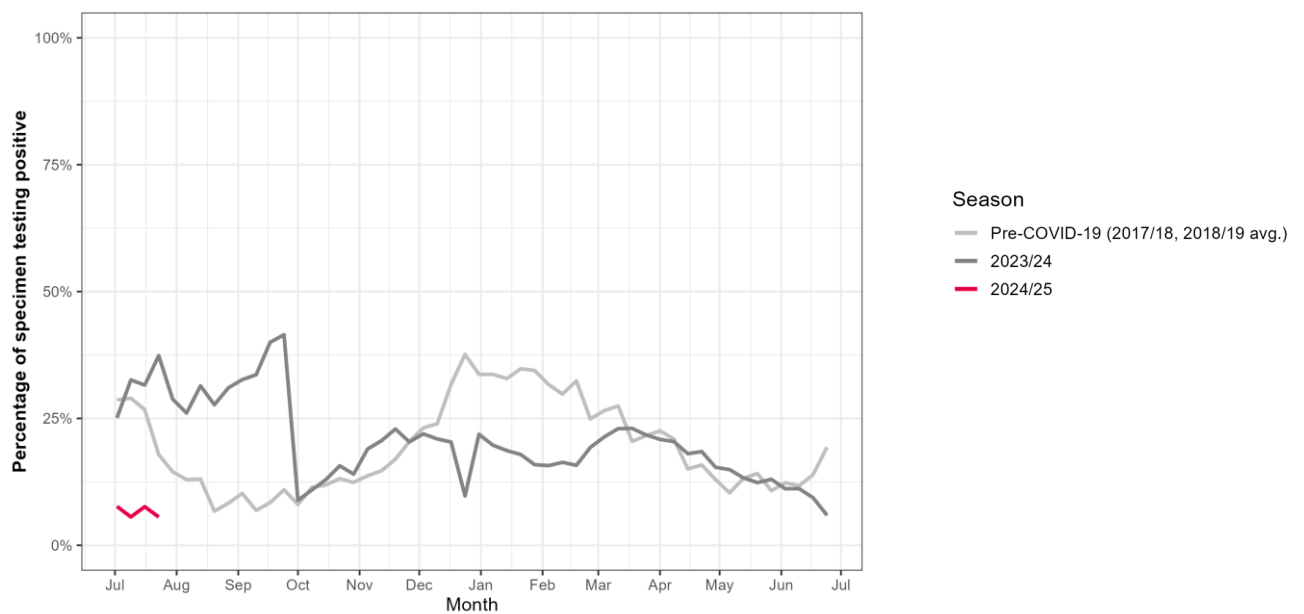


Central America Caribbean

Mexico

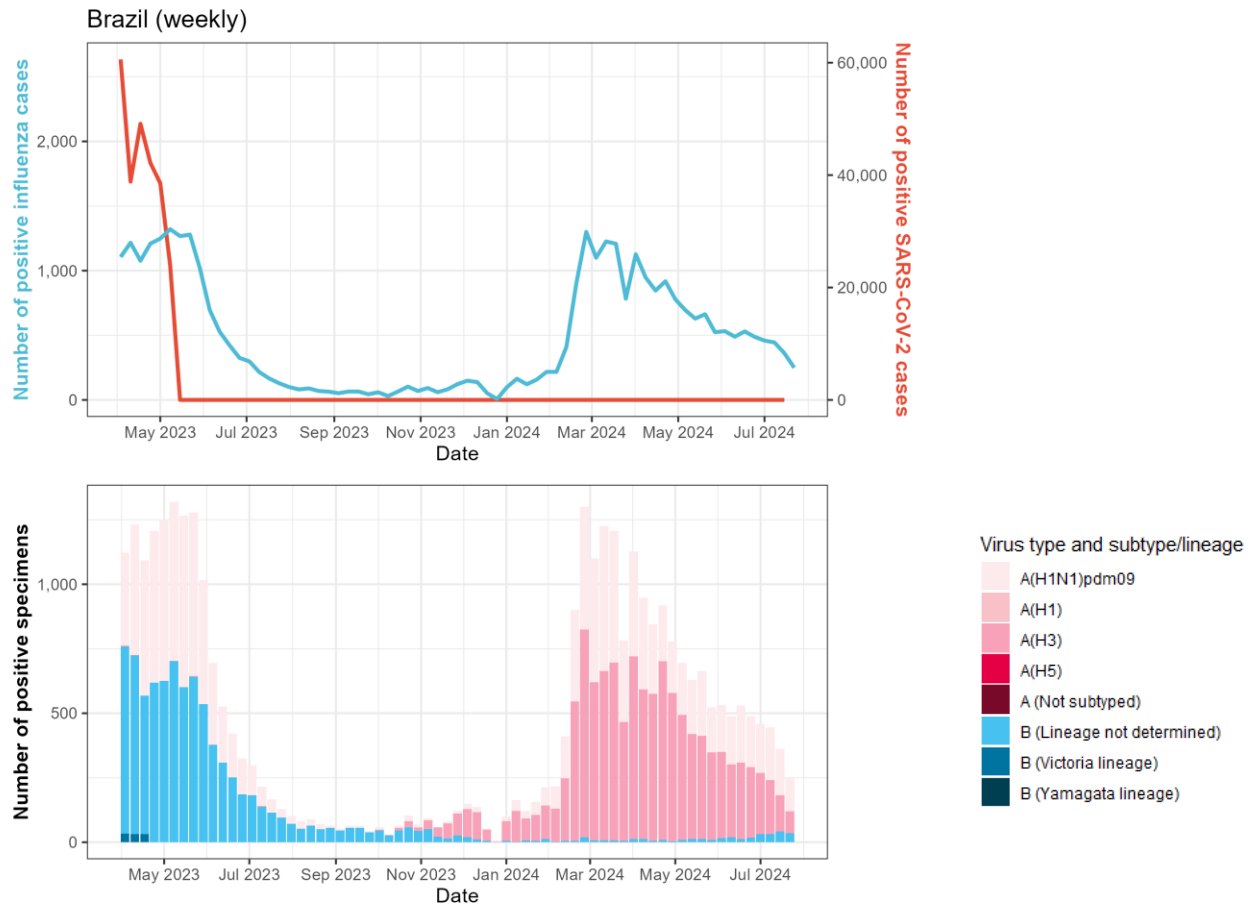


Percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza in different seasons



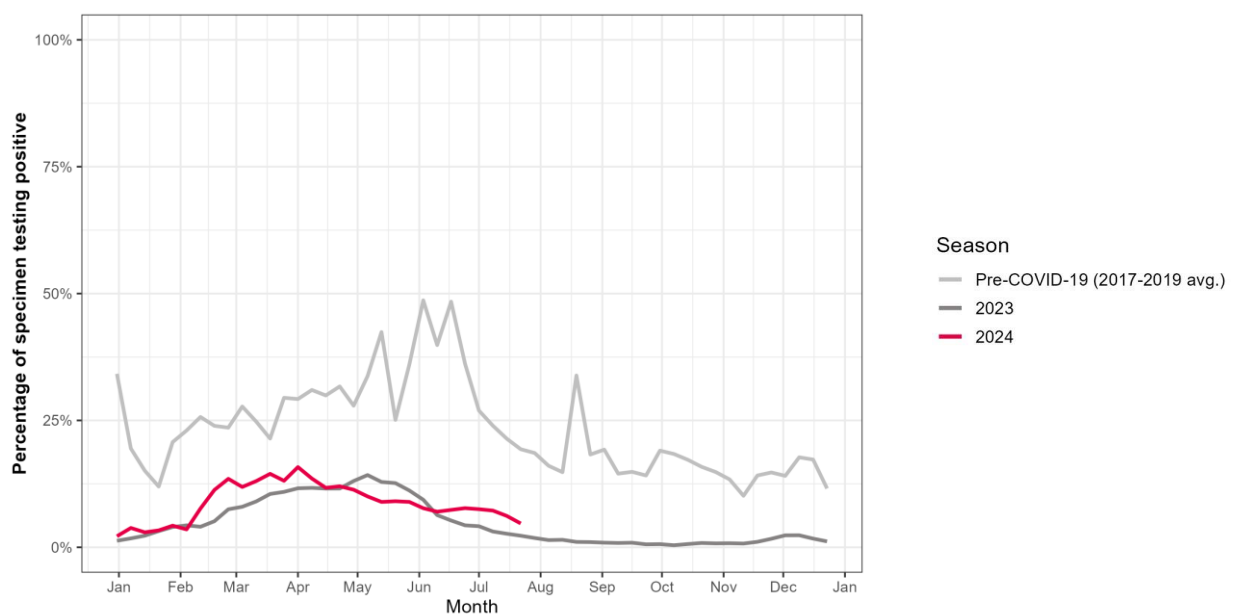
Tropical South America

Brazil



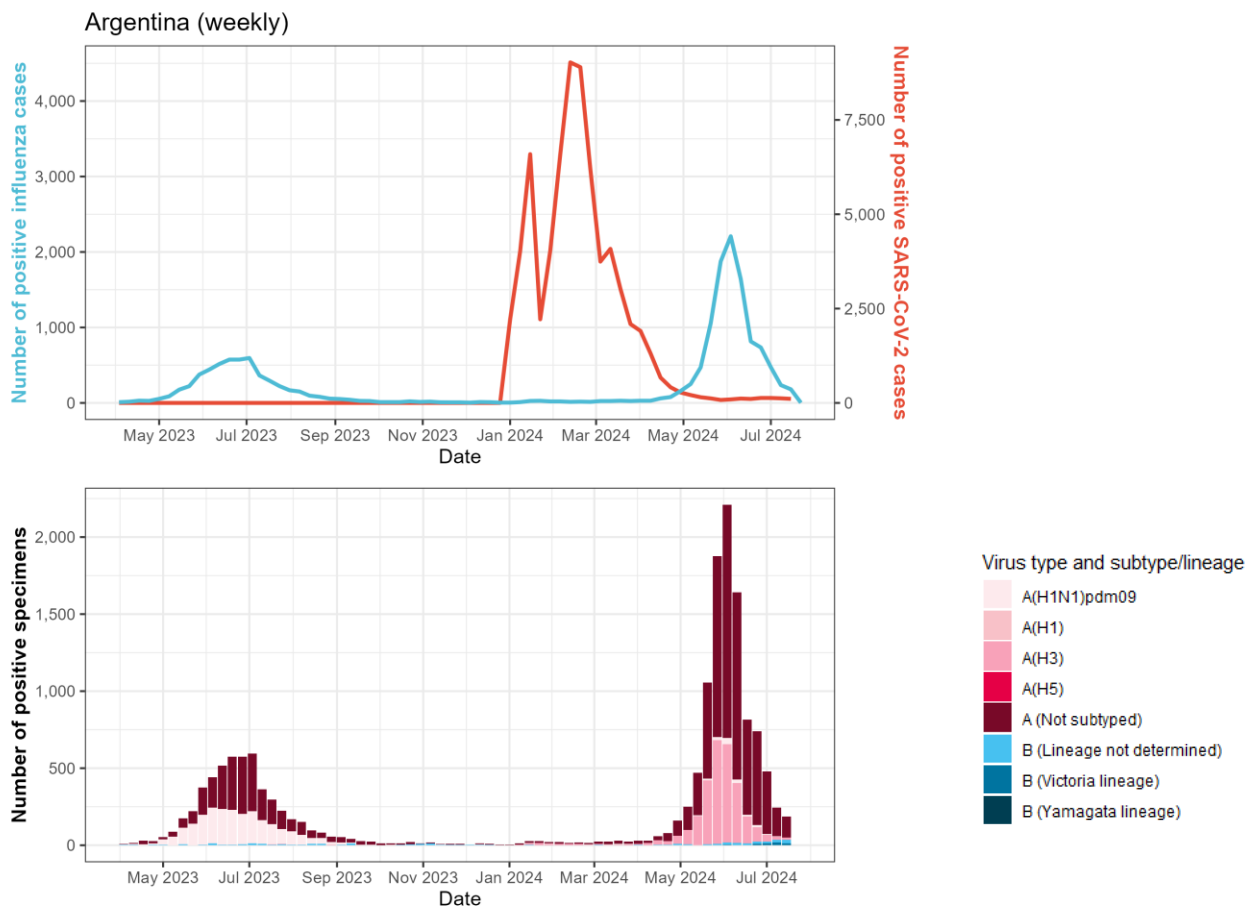
Note: Brazil has reported zero SARS-CoV-2 activity to the WHO since W2/2024

Percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza in different seasons

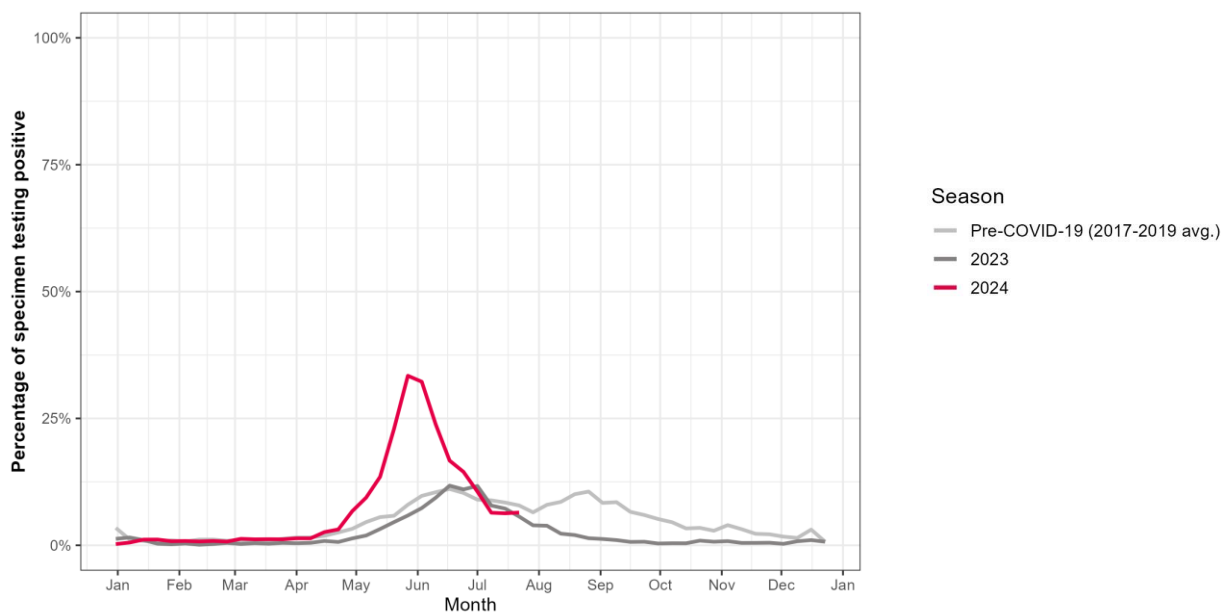


Temperate South America

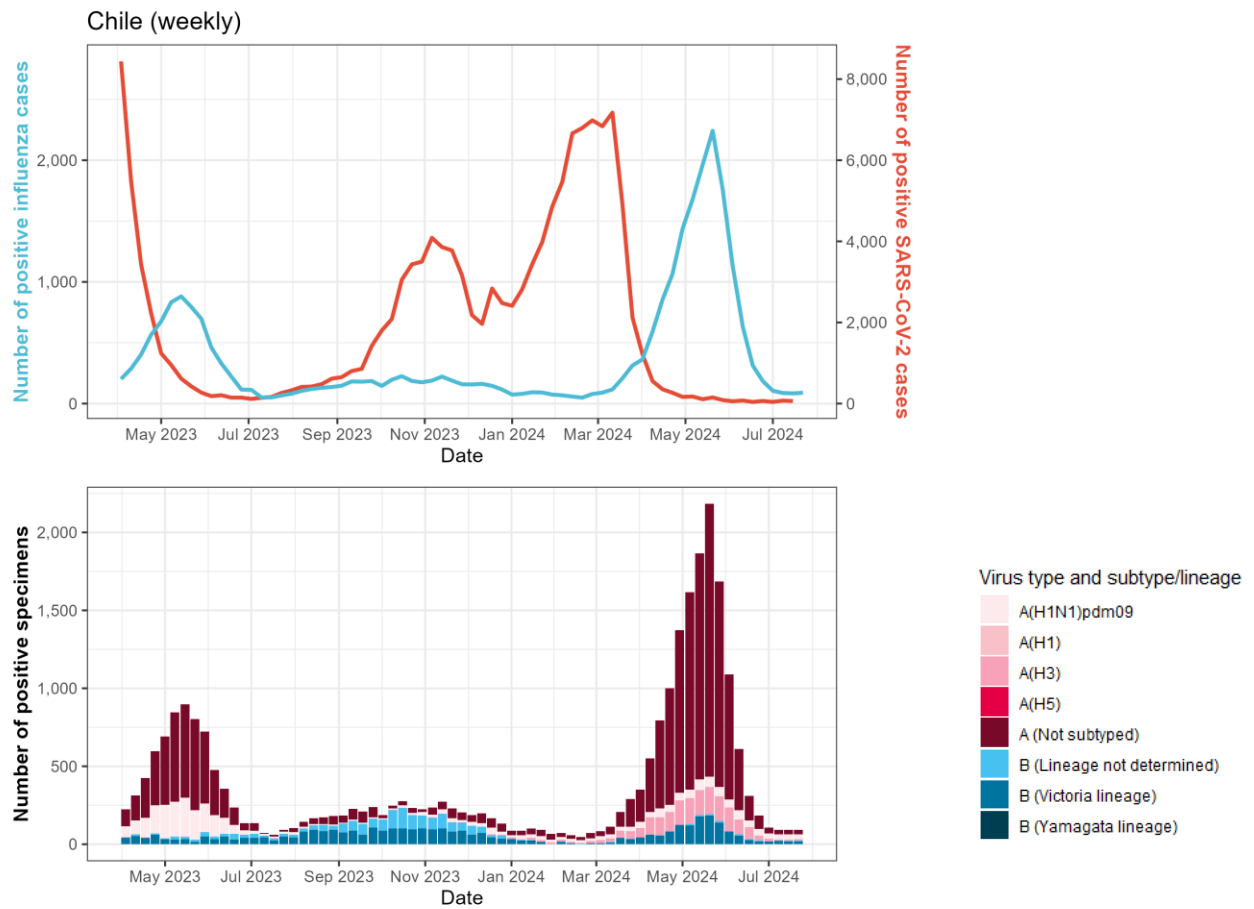
Argentina



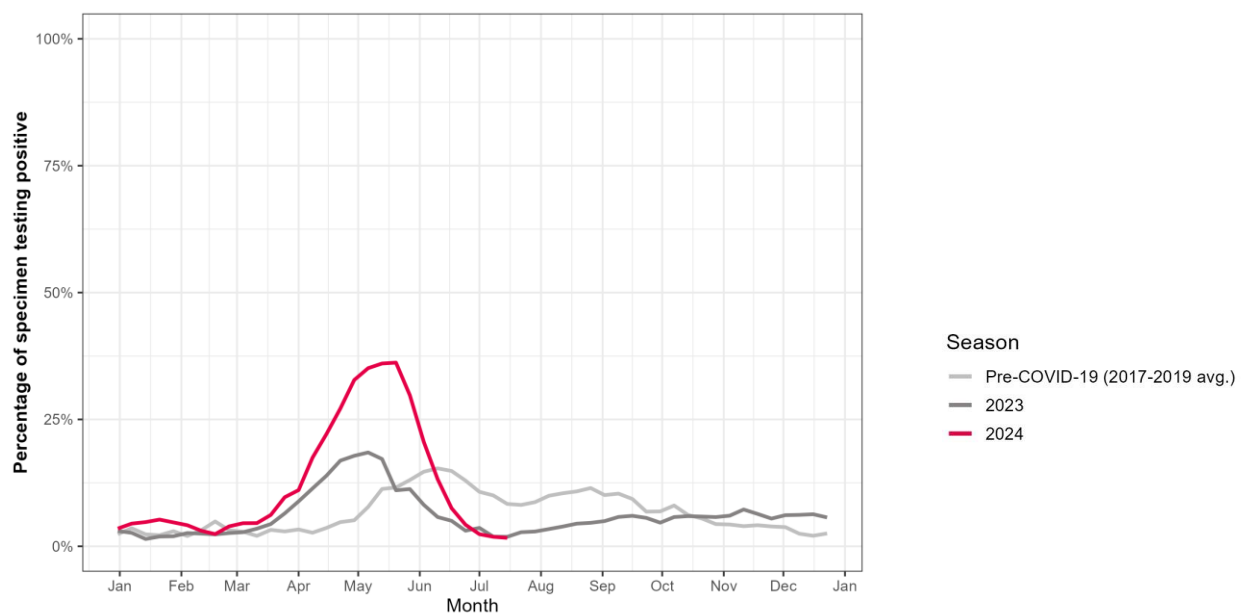
Percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza in different seasons



Chile

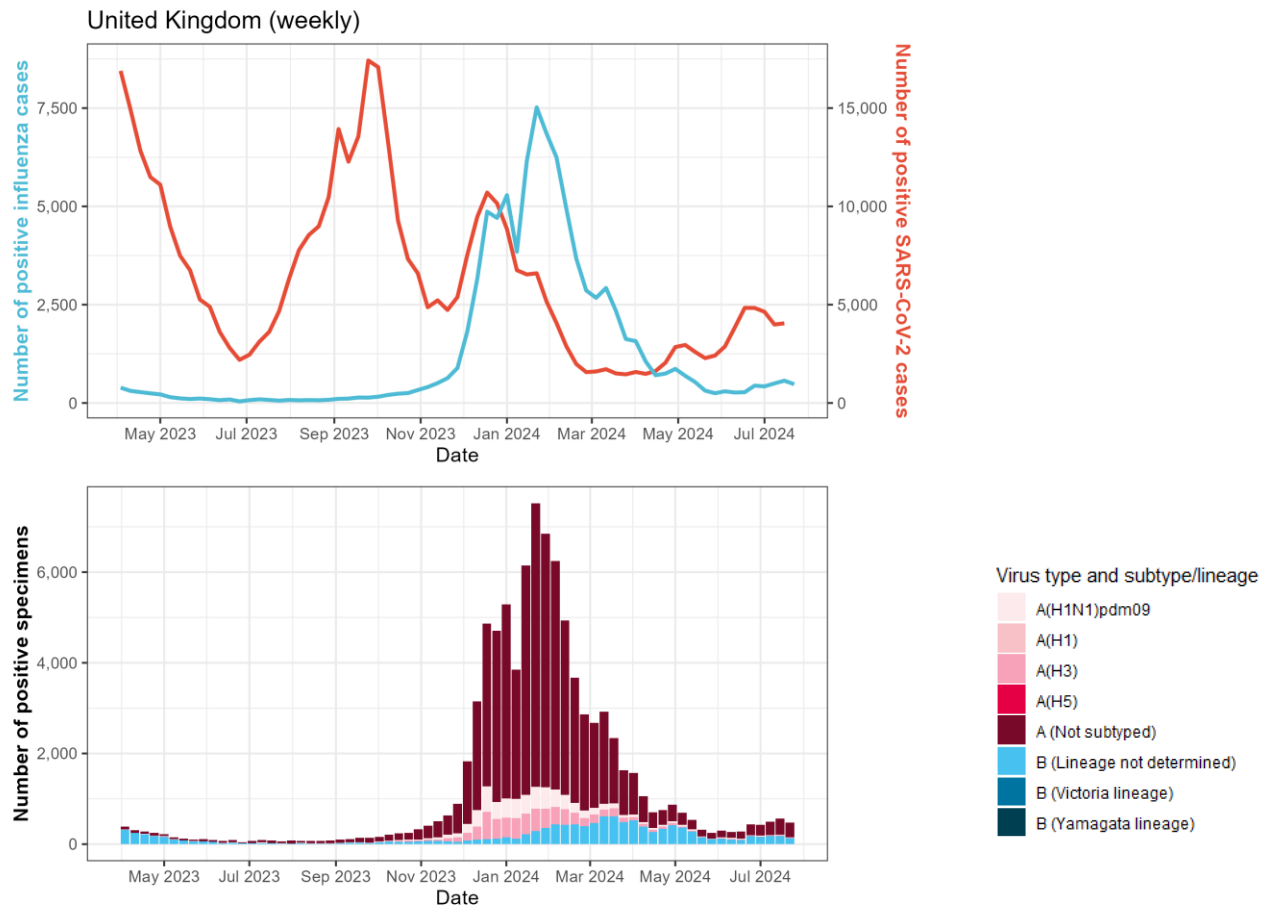


Percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza in different seasons

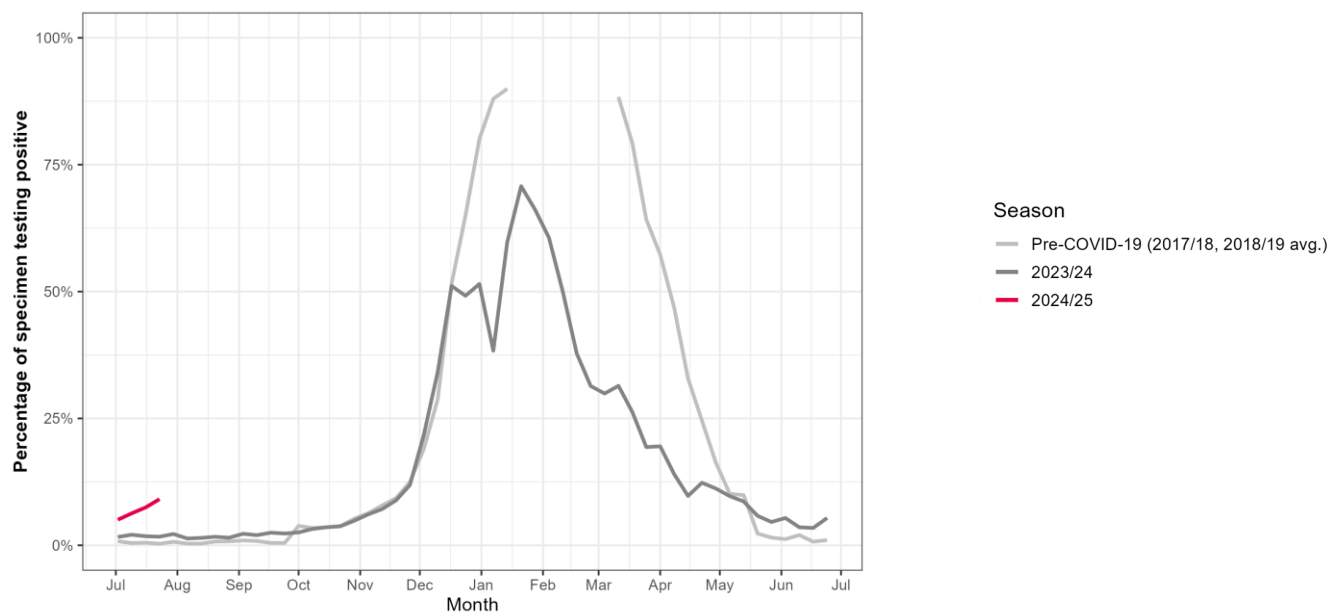


Northern Europe

United Kingdom

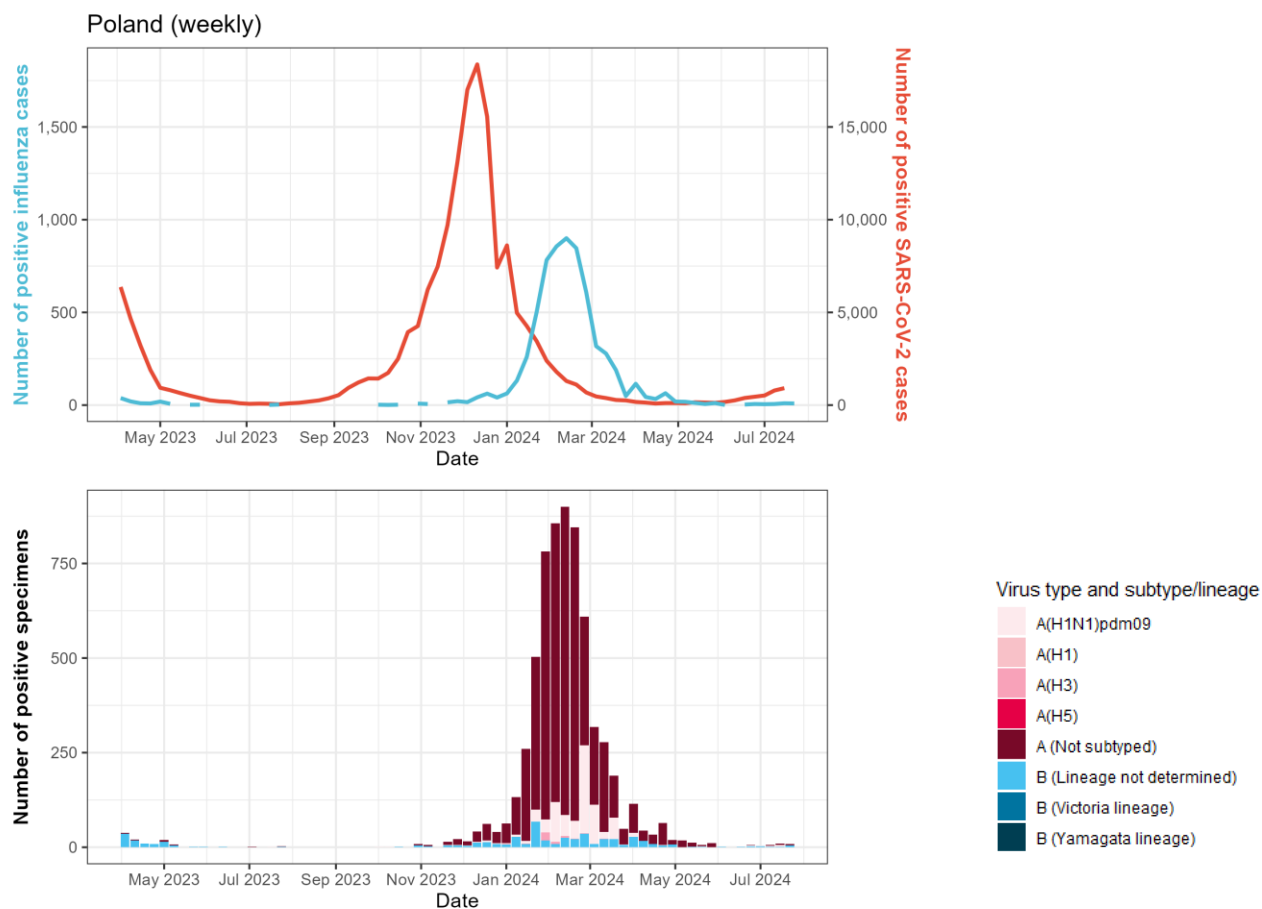


Percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza in different seasons

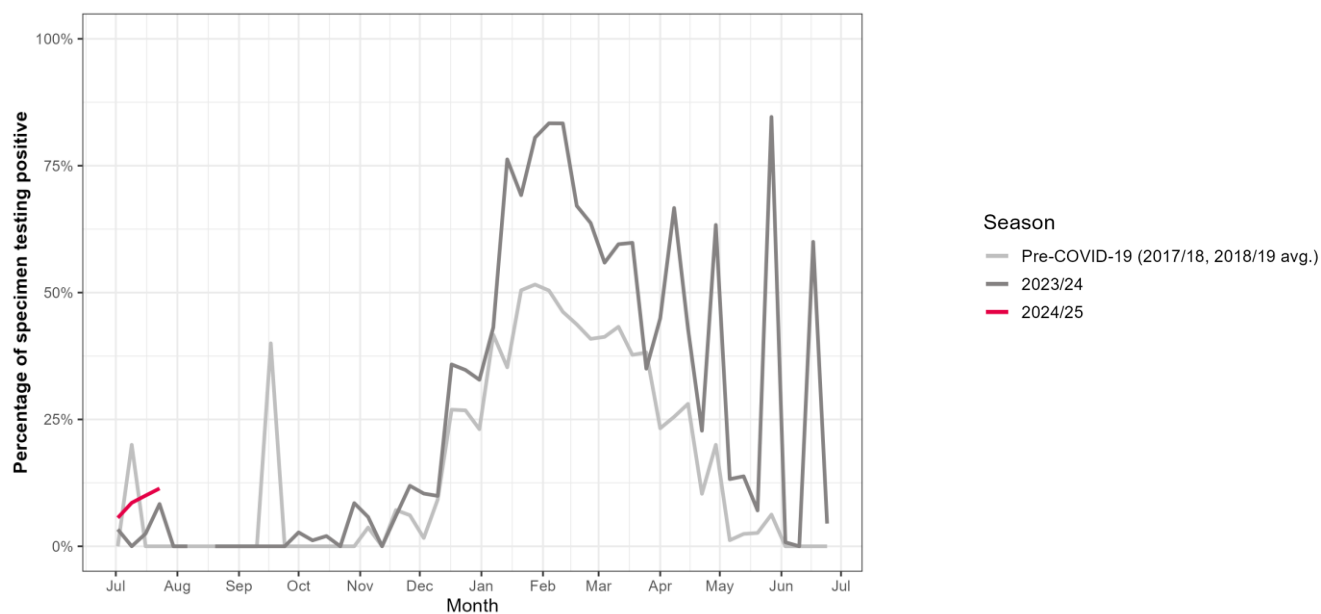


Eastern Europe

Poland



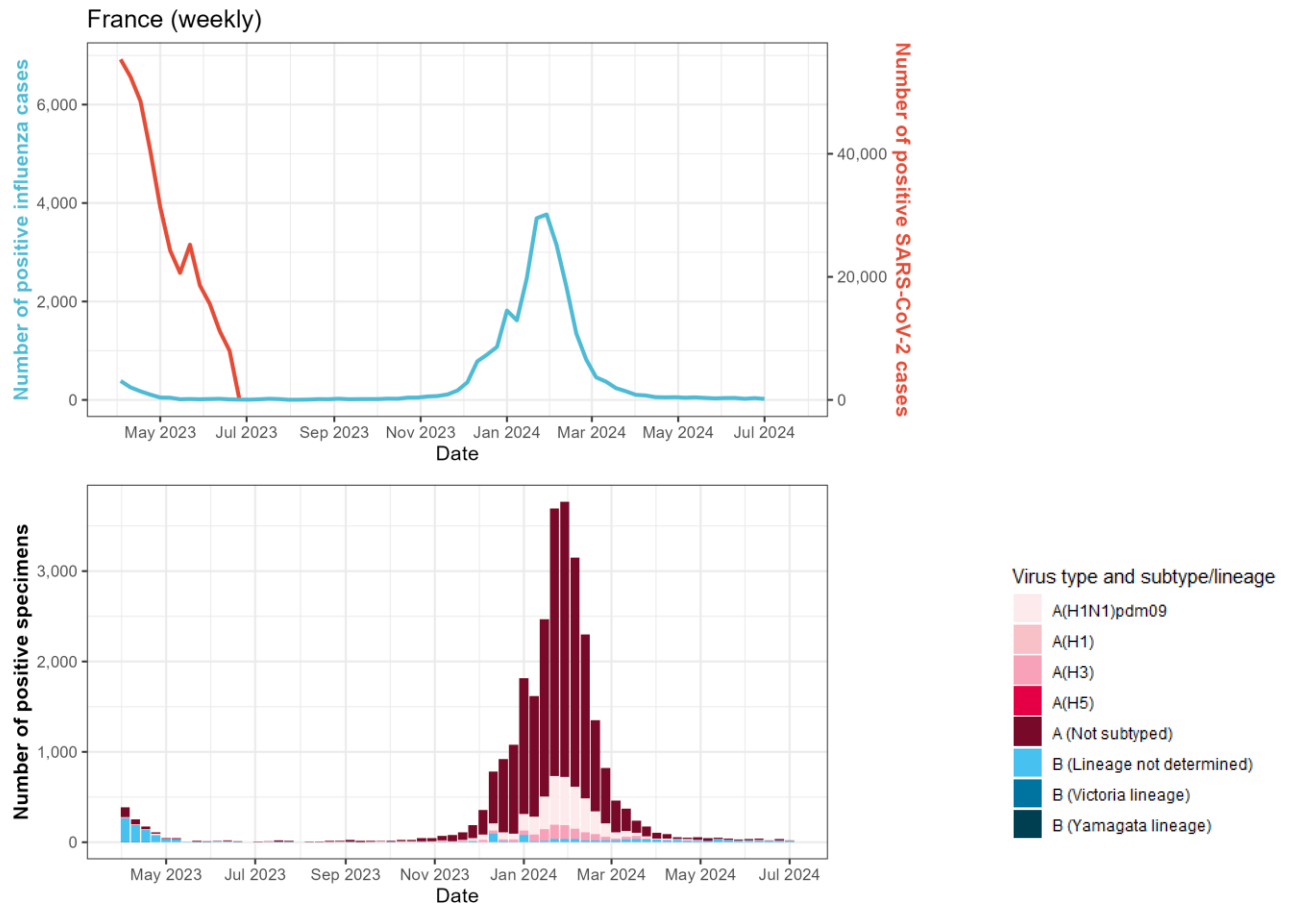
Percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza in different seasons



Note: the high variety in percentage positive since April 2024 is likely caused by a low number of tested specimens

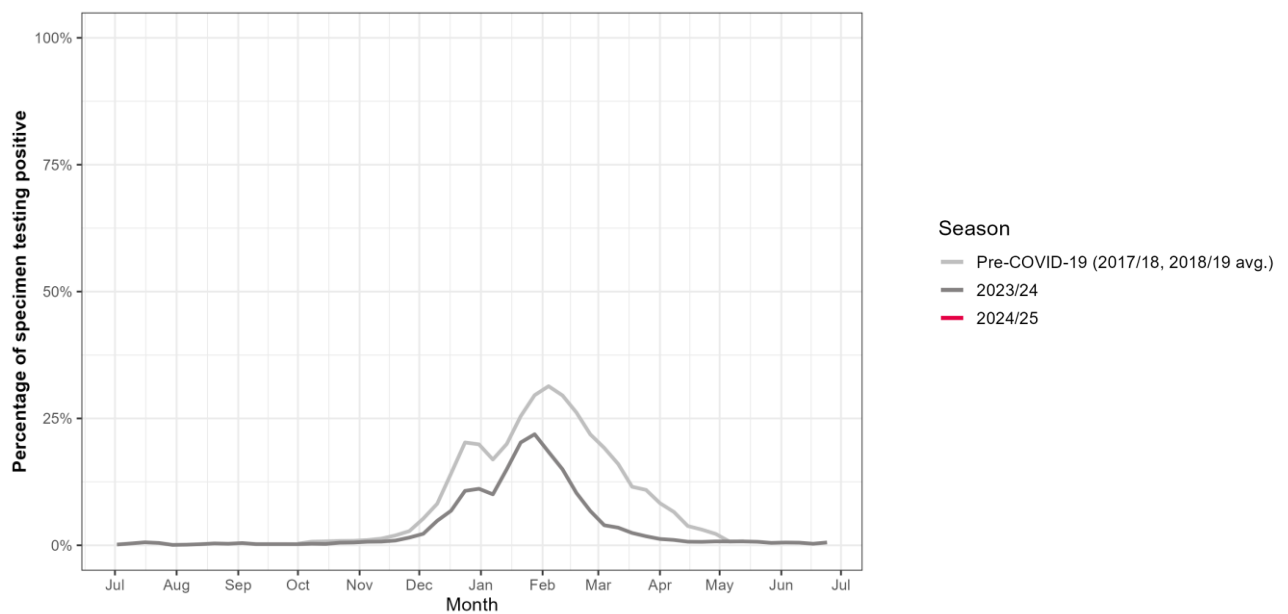
South West Europe

France

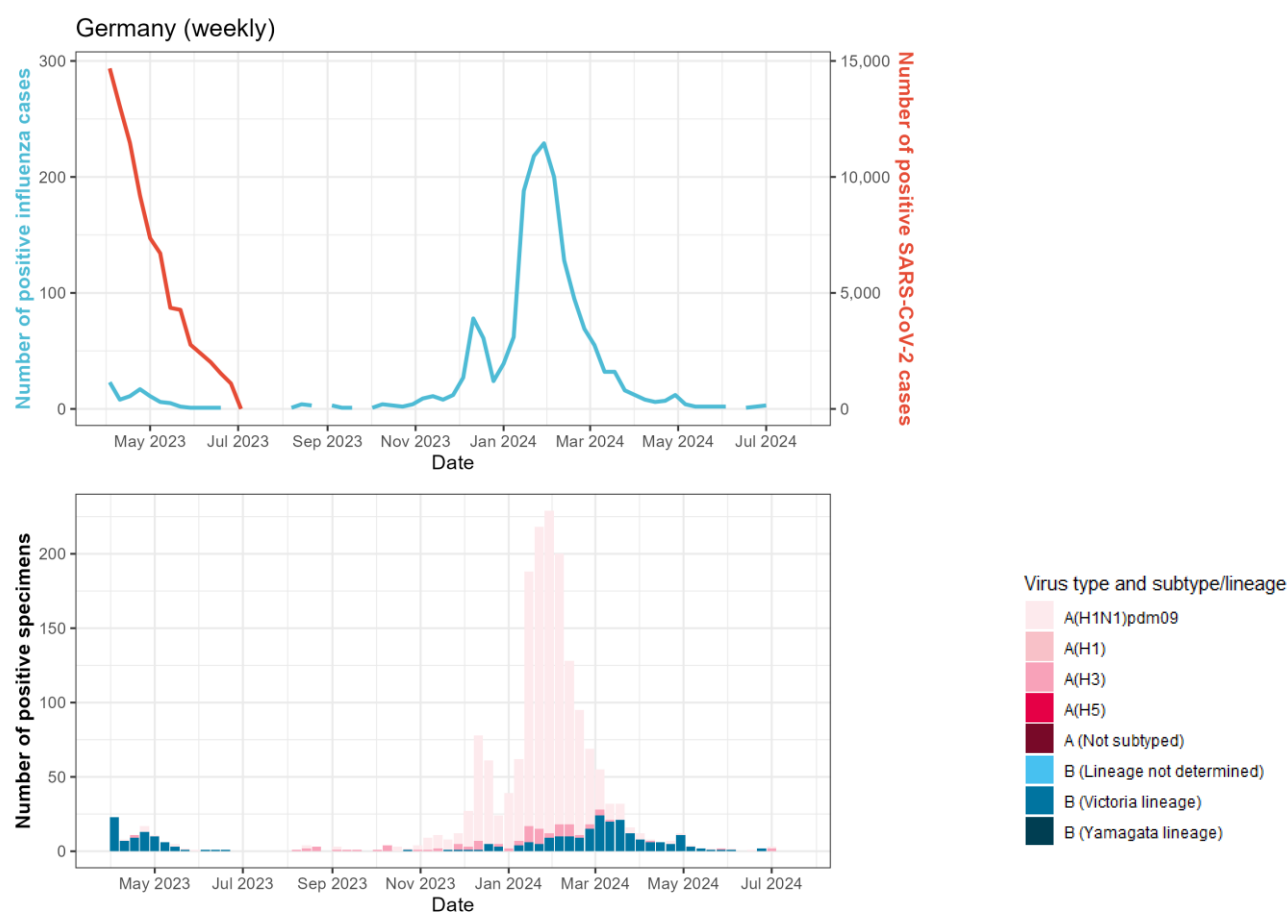


Note: France stopped reporting SARS-CoV-2 activity to the WHO since W26/2023

Percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza in different seasons

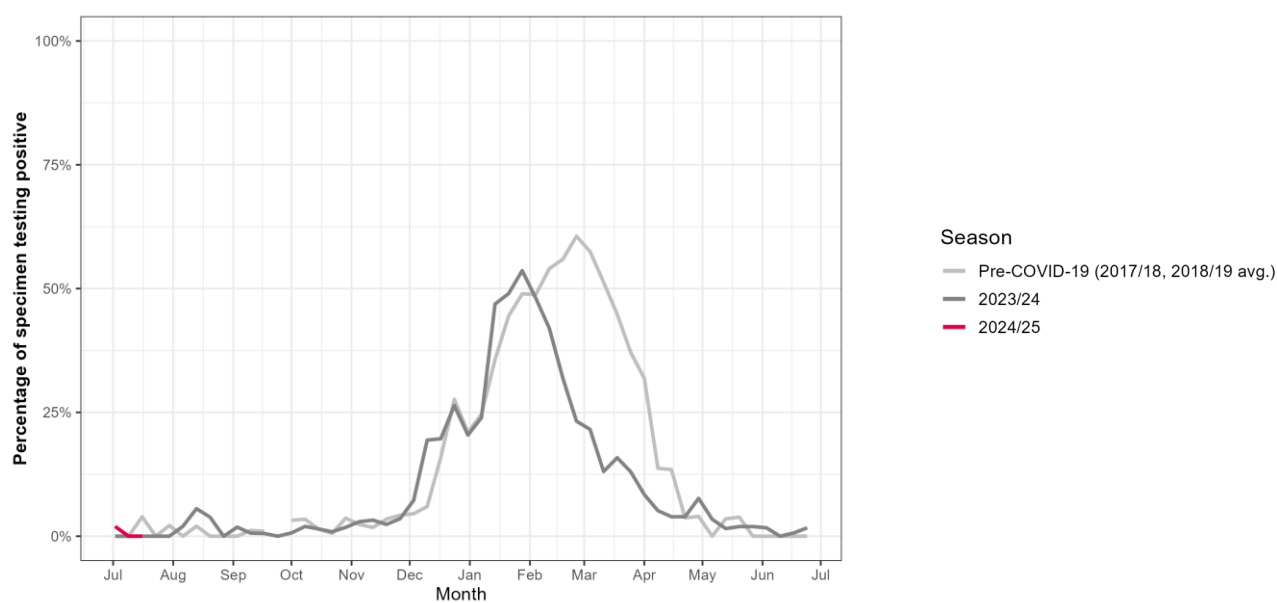


Germany

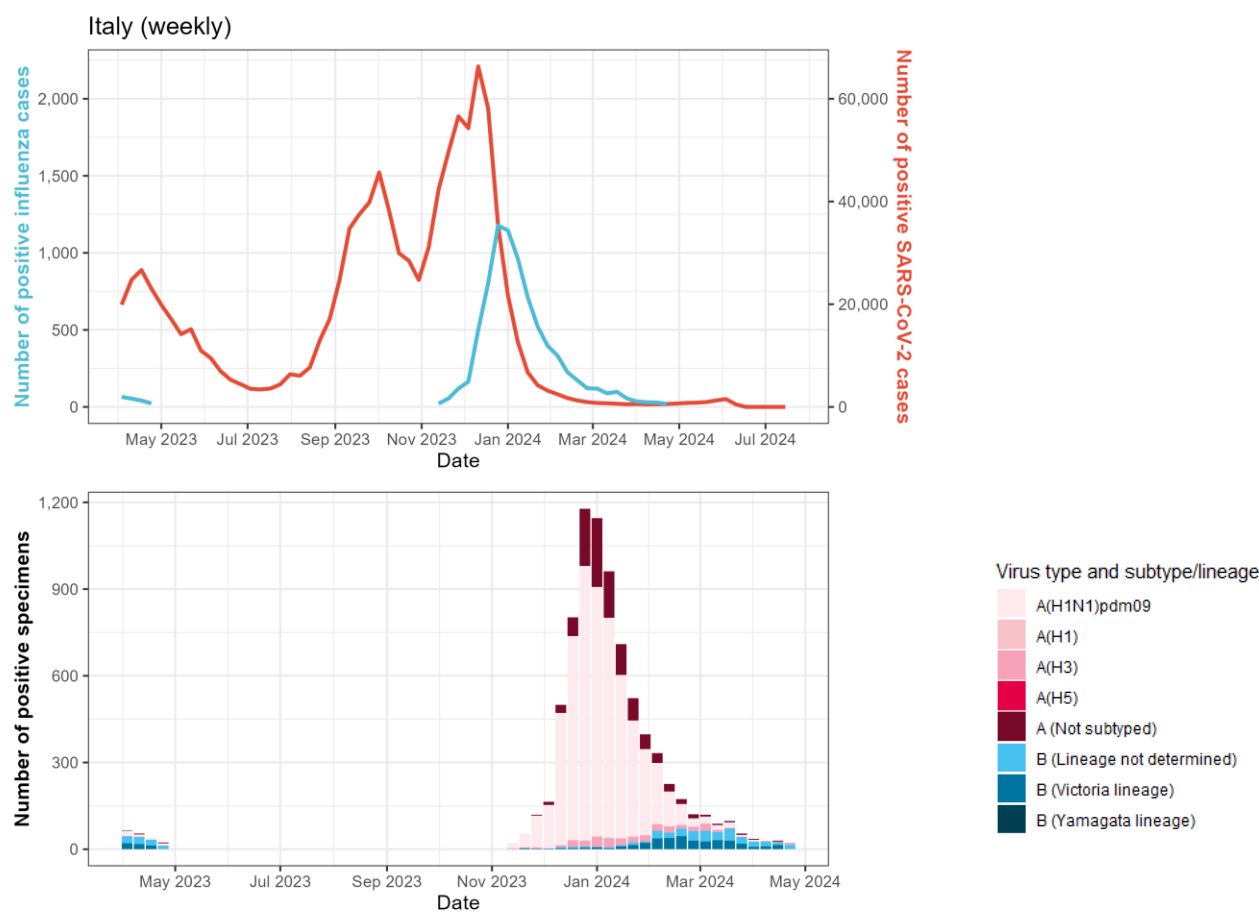


Note: Germany stopped reporting **SARS-CoV-2** activity to the WHO since W27/2023

Percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza in different seasons

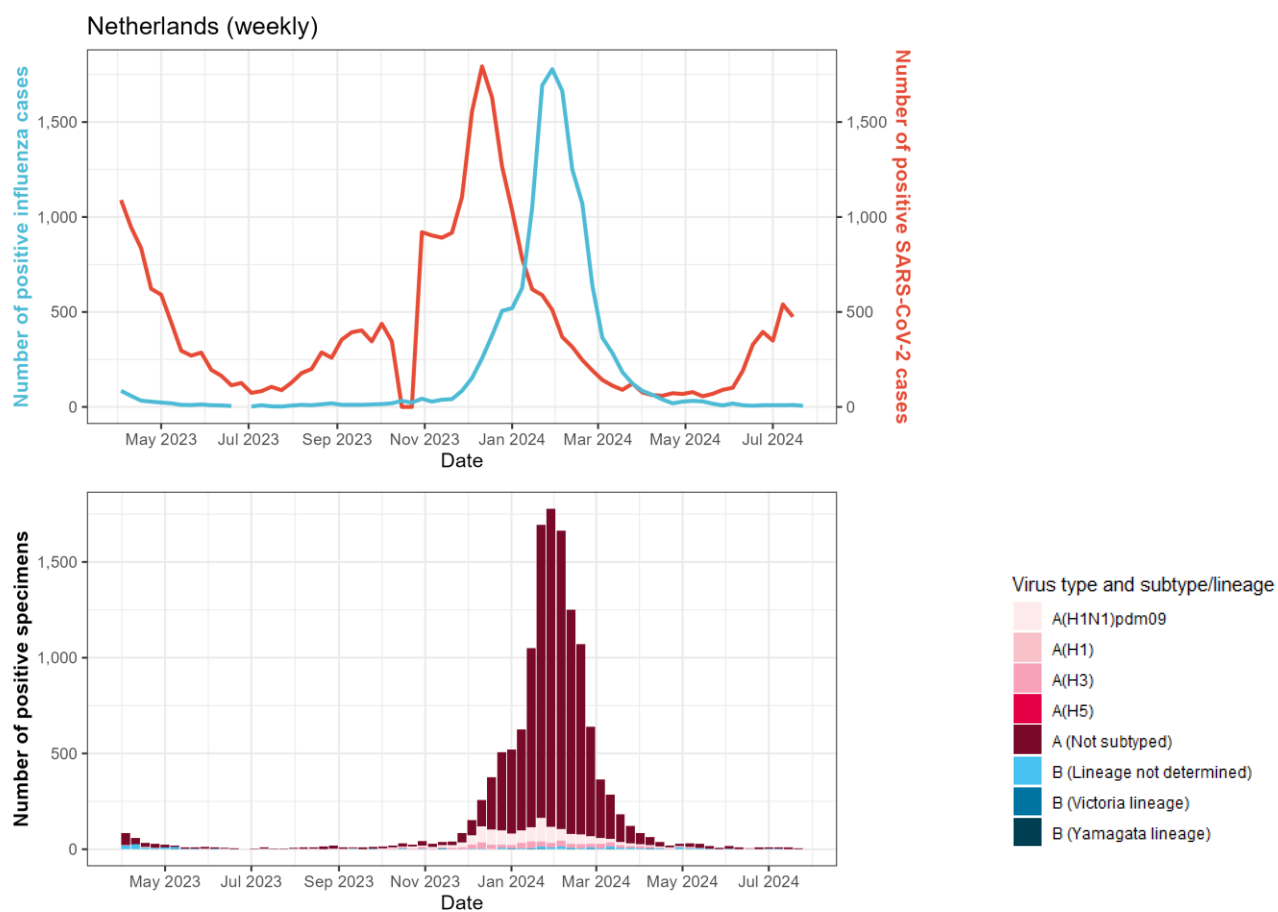


Italy



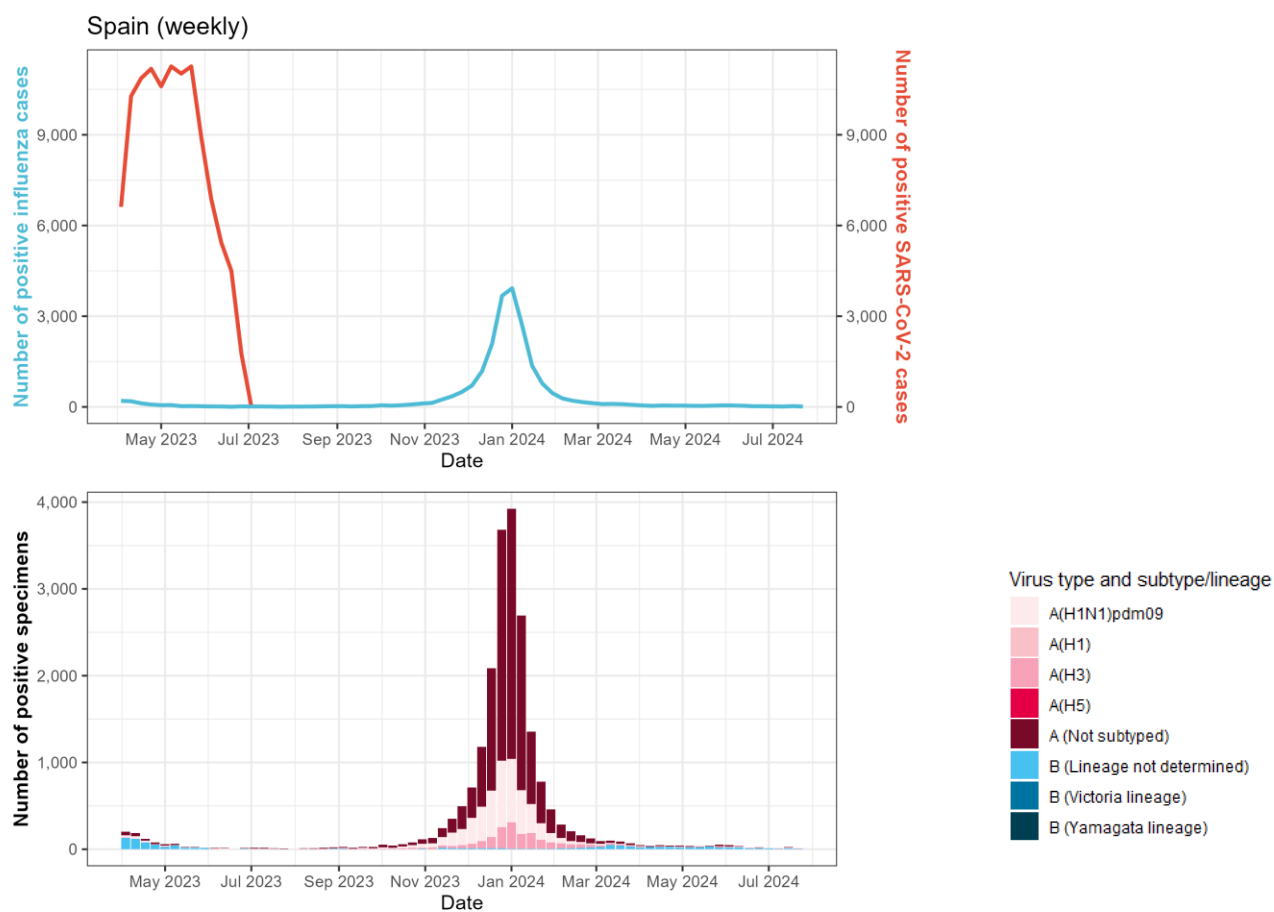
Percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza in different seasons: data not available

Netherlands



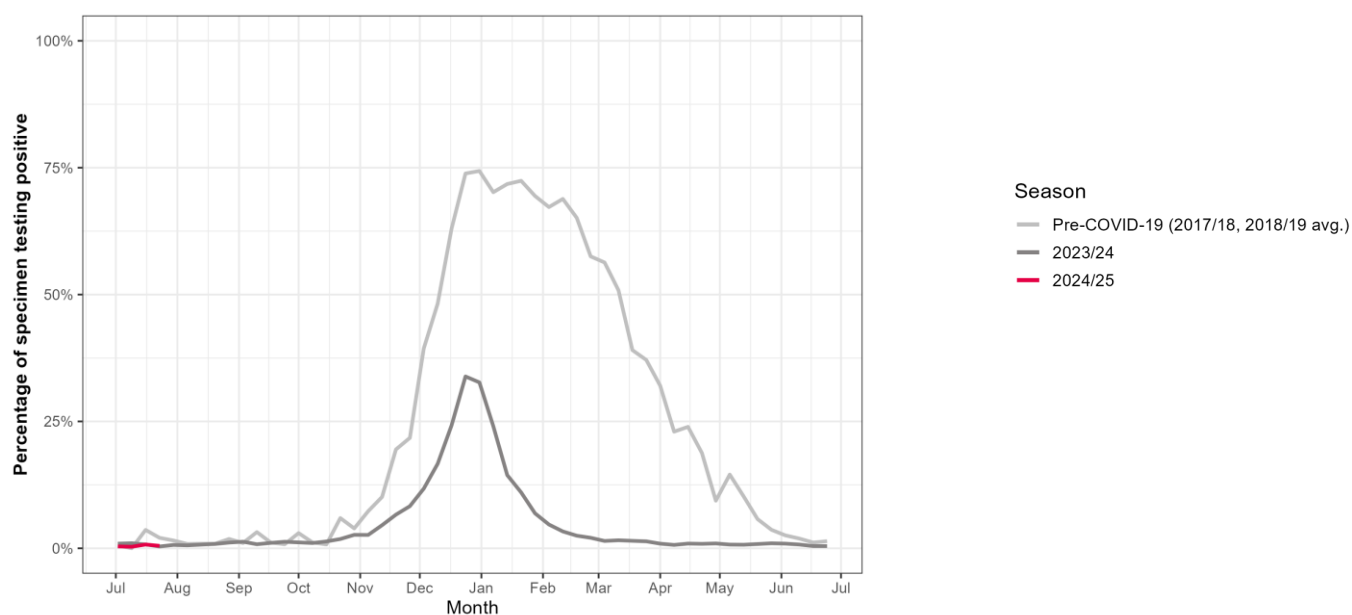
Percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza in different seasons: data not available

Spain



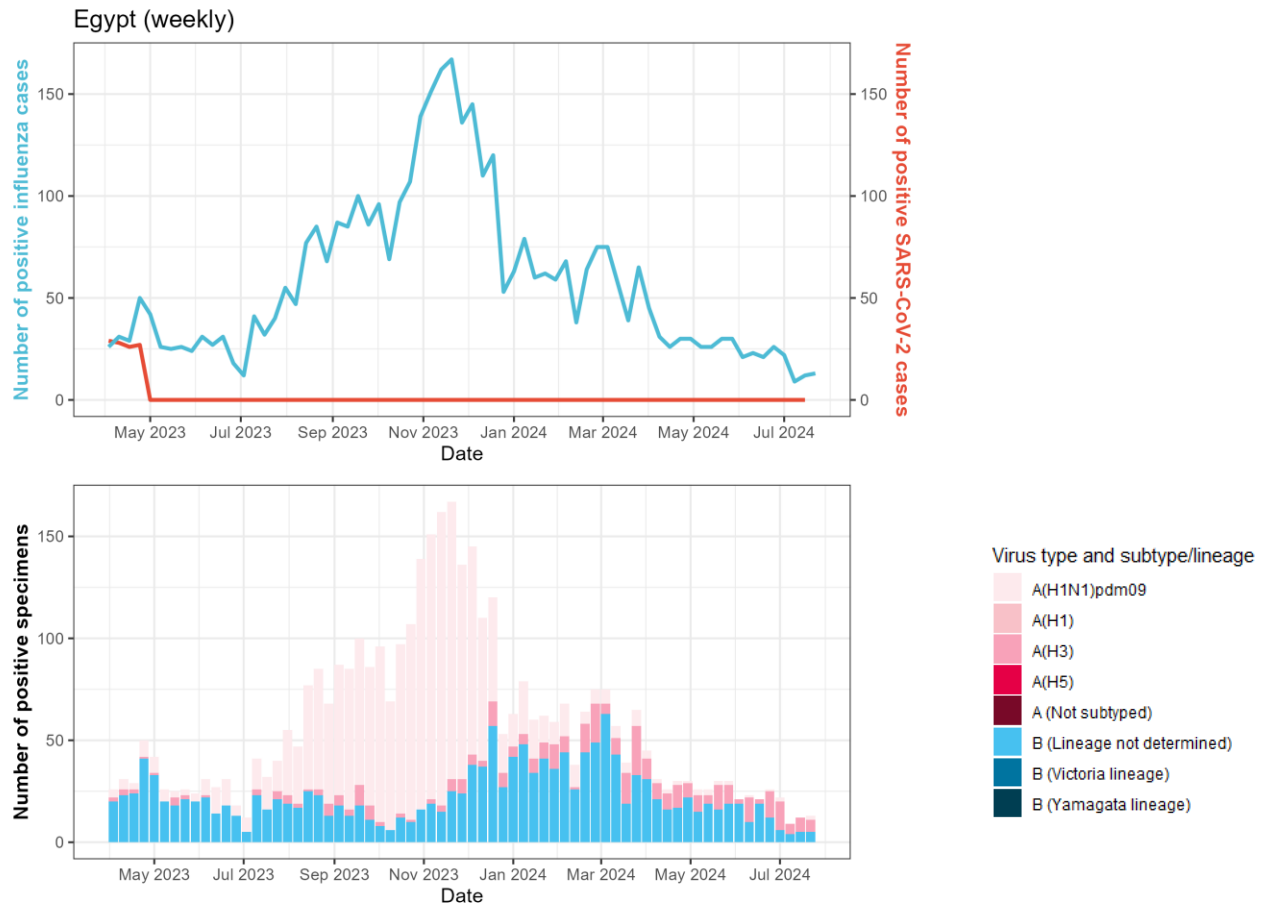
Note: Spain stopped reporting **SARS-CoV-2** activity to the WHO since W27/2023

Percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza in different seasons



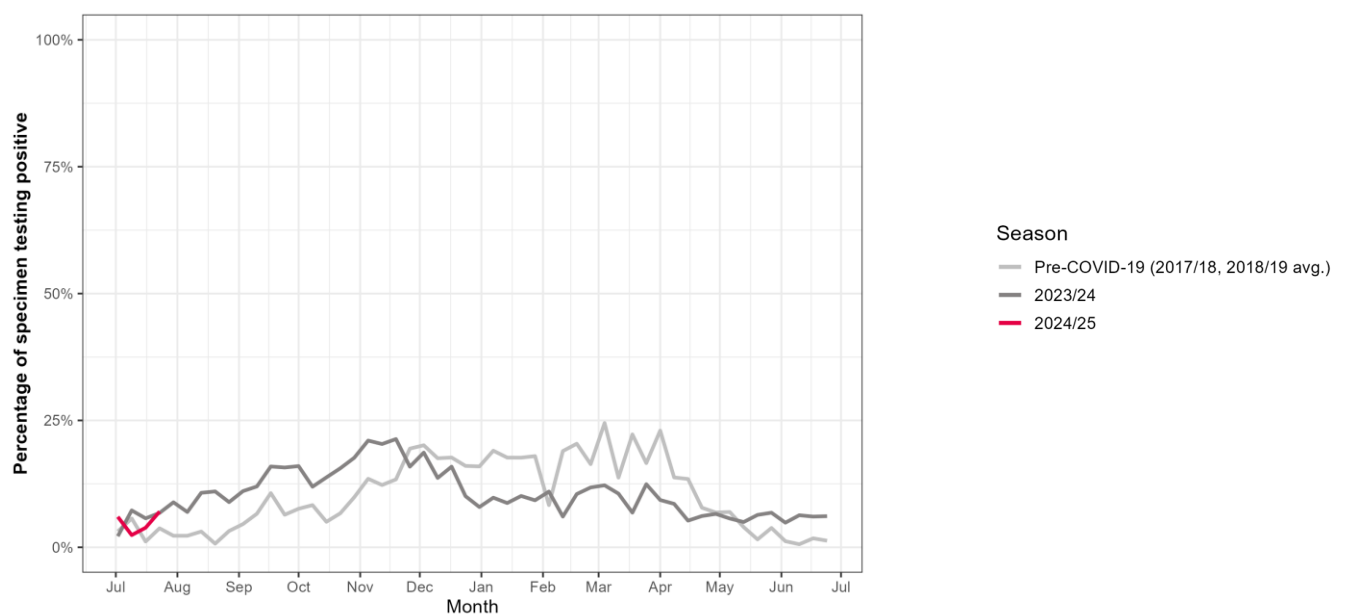
Northern Africa

Egypt



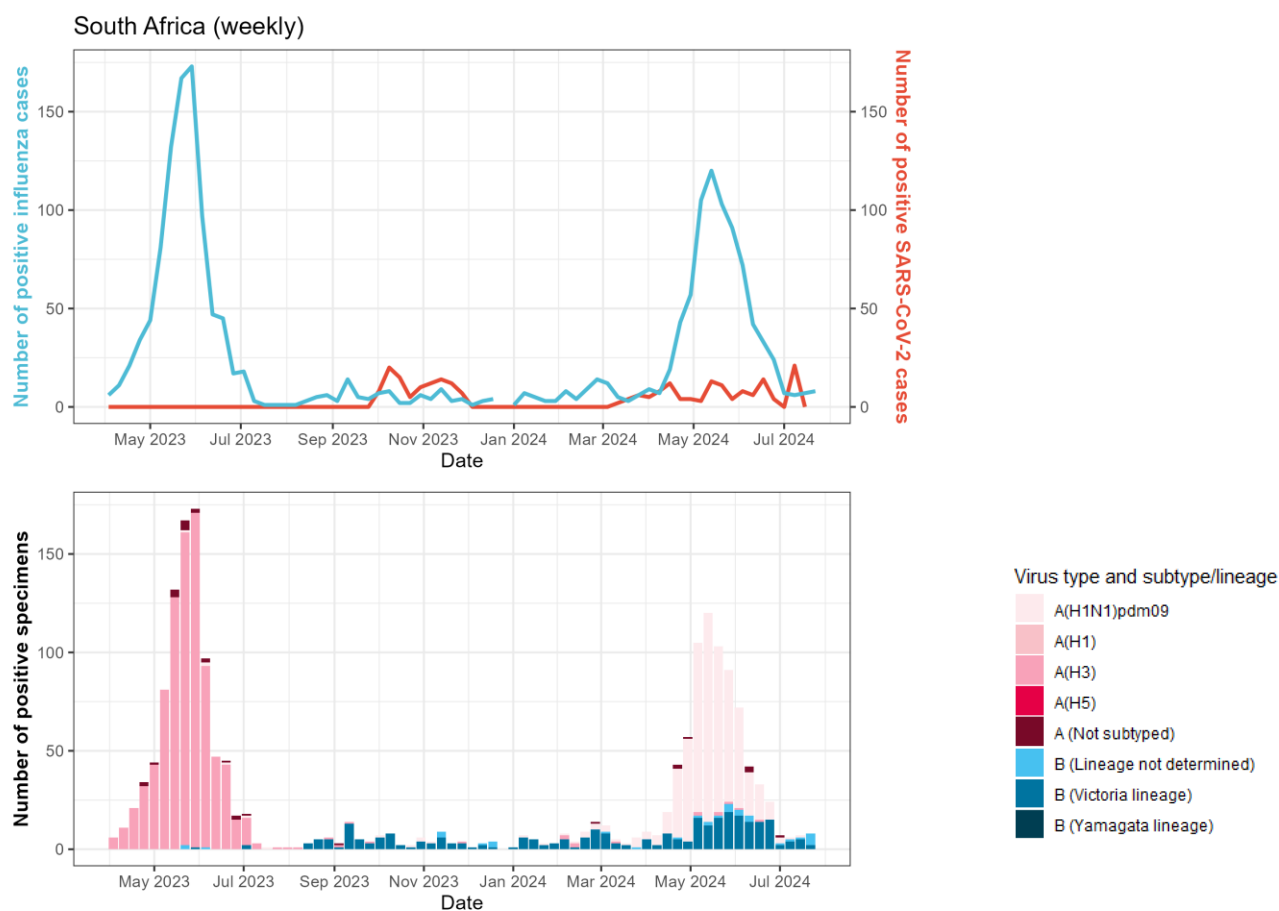
Note: Egypt has reported zero **SARS-CoV-2** activity to the WHO since W18/2023

Percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza in different seasons

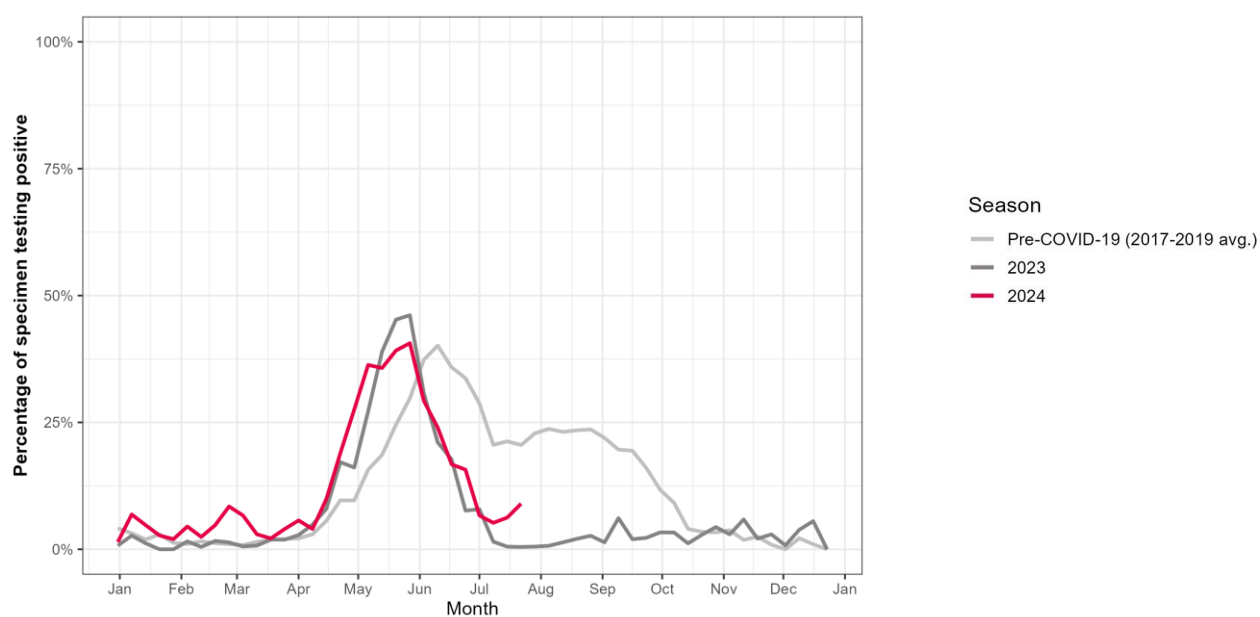


Southern Africa

South Africa

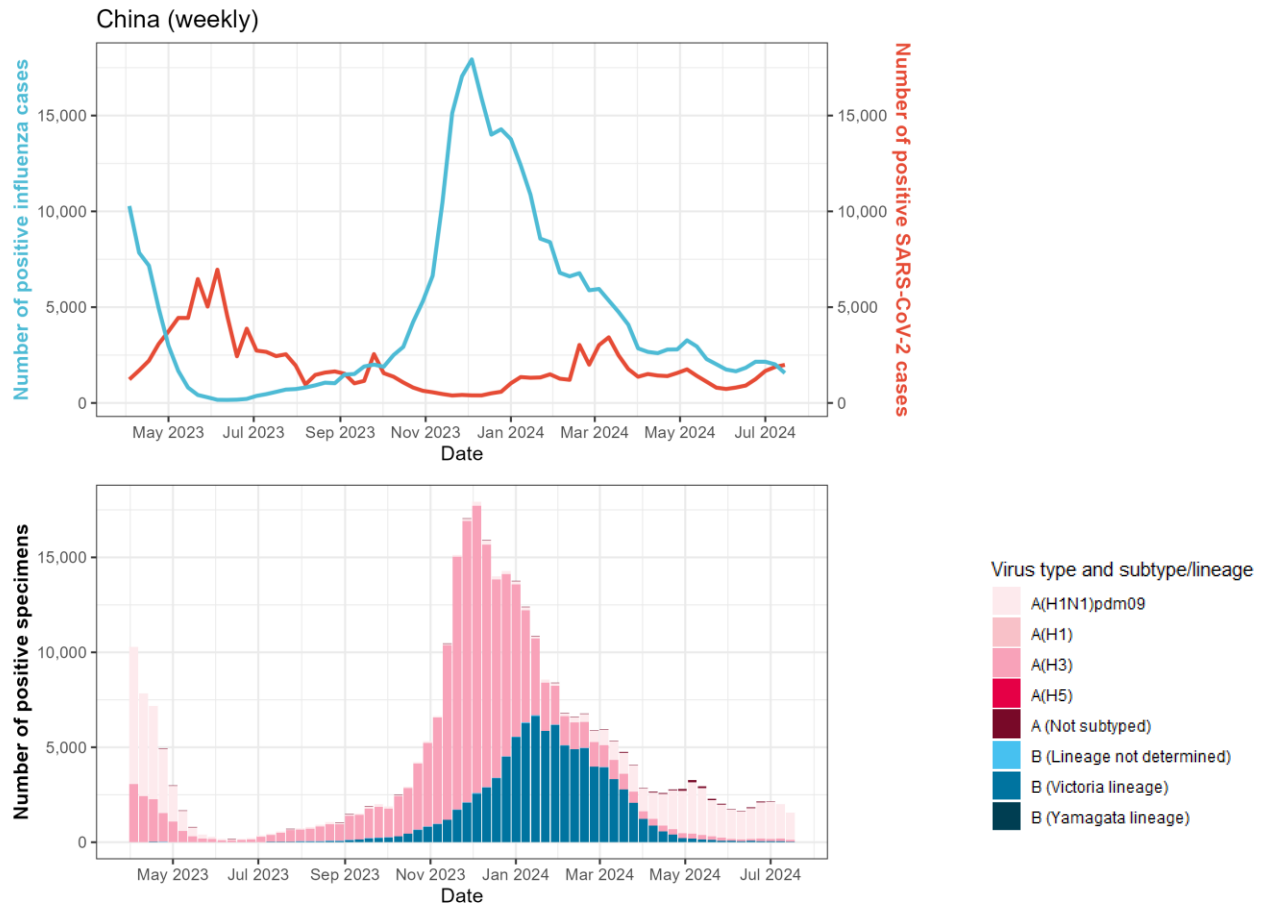


Percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza in different seasons

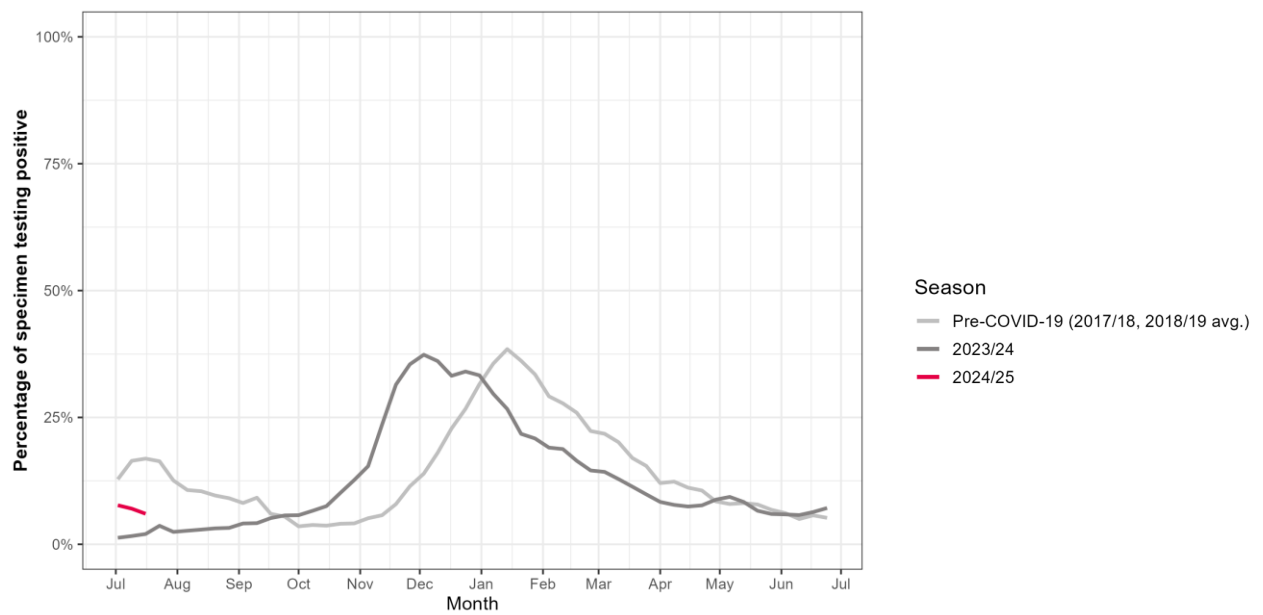


Eastern Asia

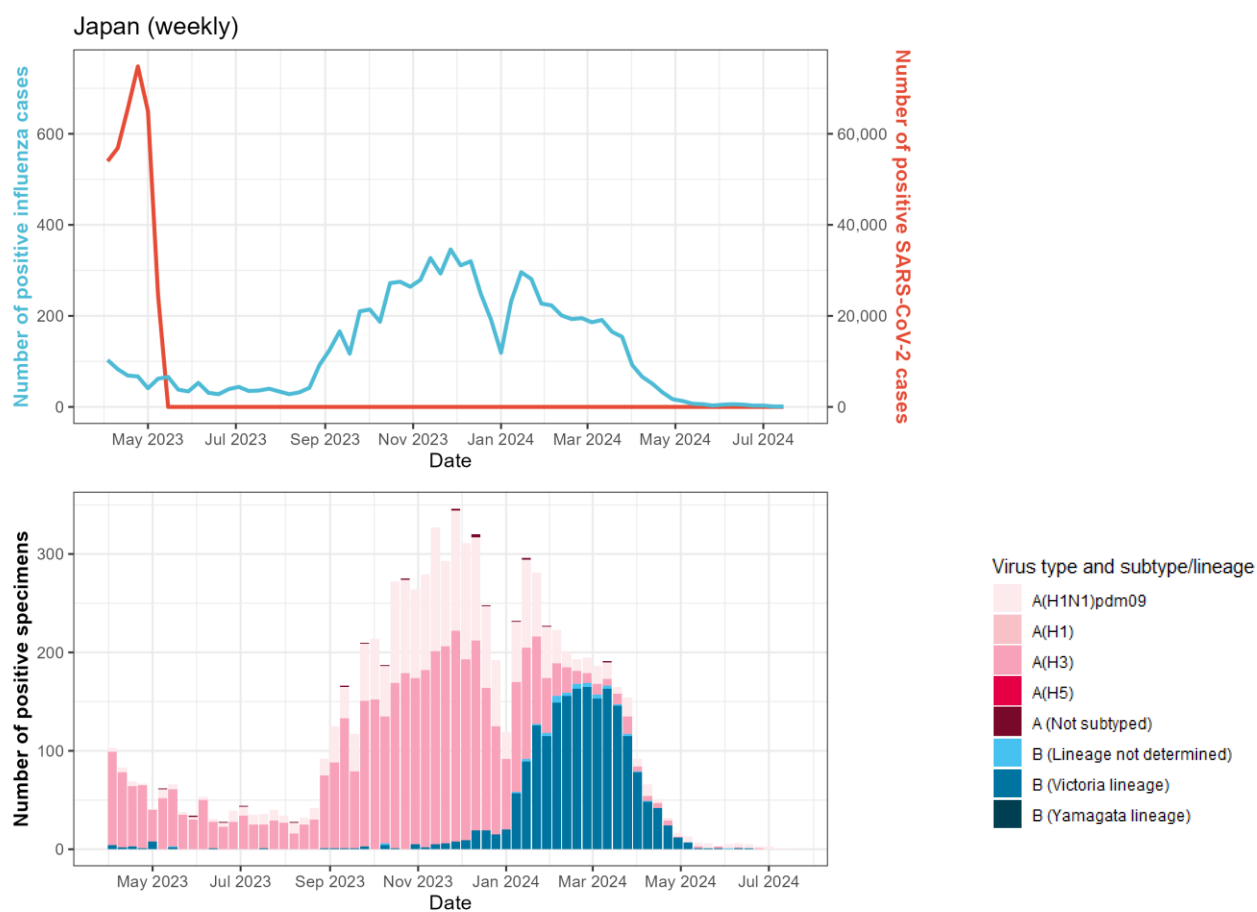
China



Percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza in different seasons



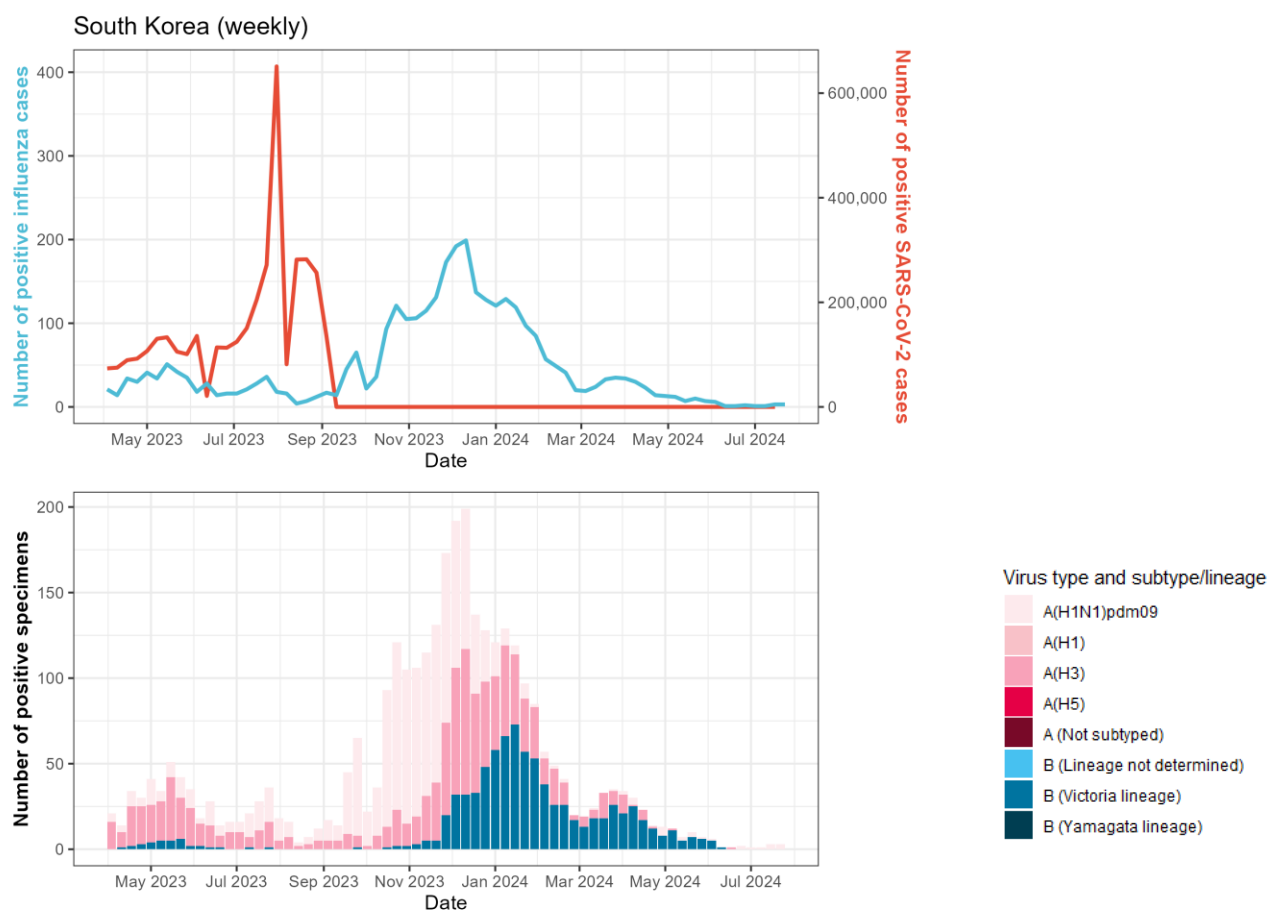
Japan



Note: Japan has reported zero **SARS-CoV-2** activity to the WHO since W21/2023

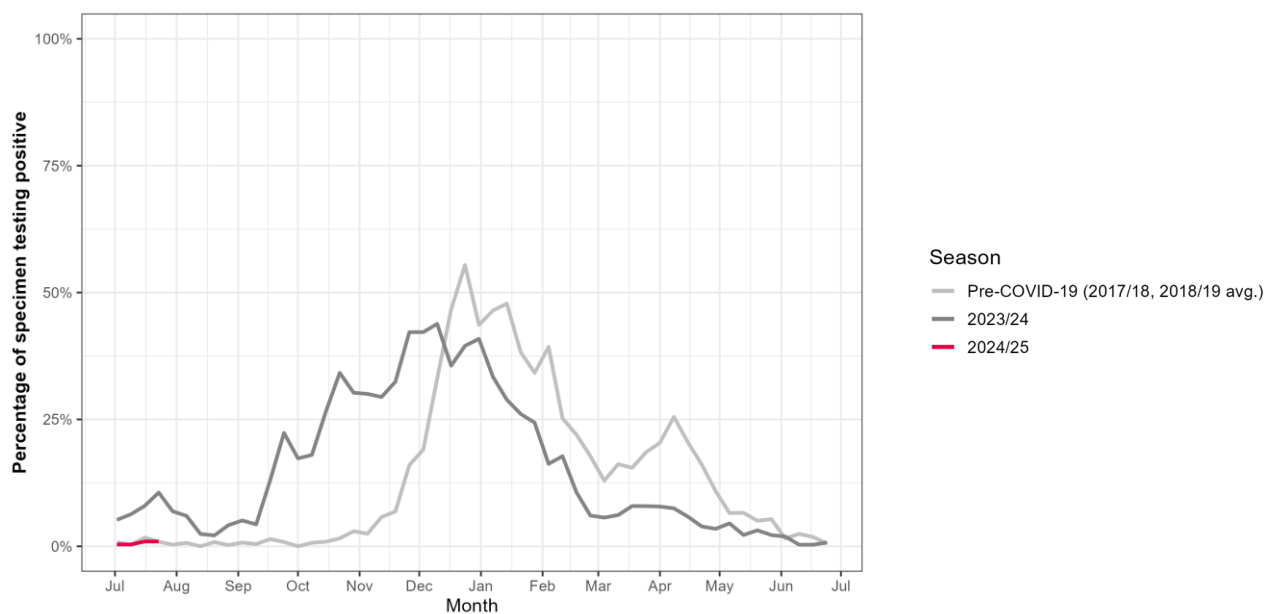
Percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza in different seasons: data not available

South Korea



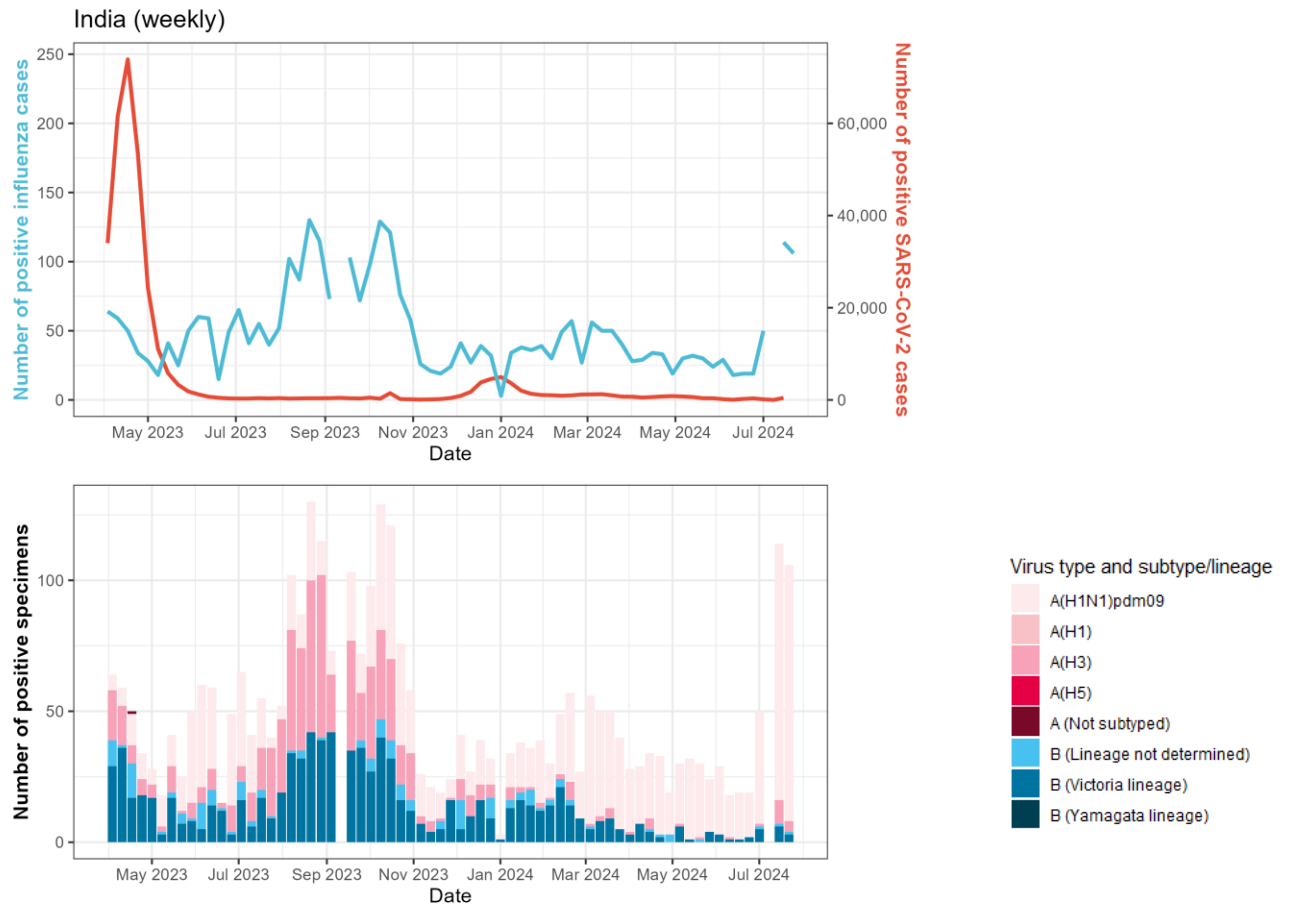
Note: South Korea has reported zero SARS-CoV-2 activity to the WHO since W37/2023

Percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza in different seasons

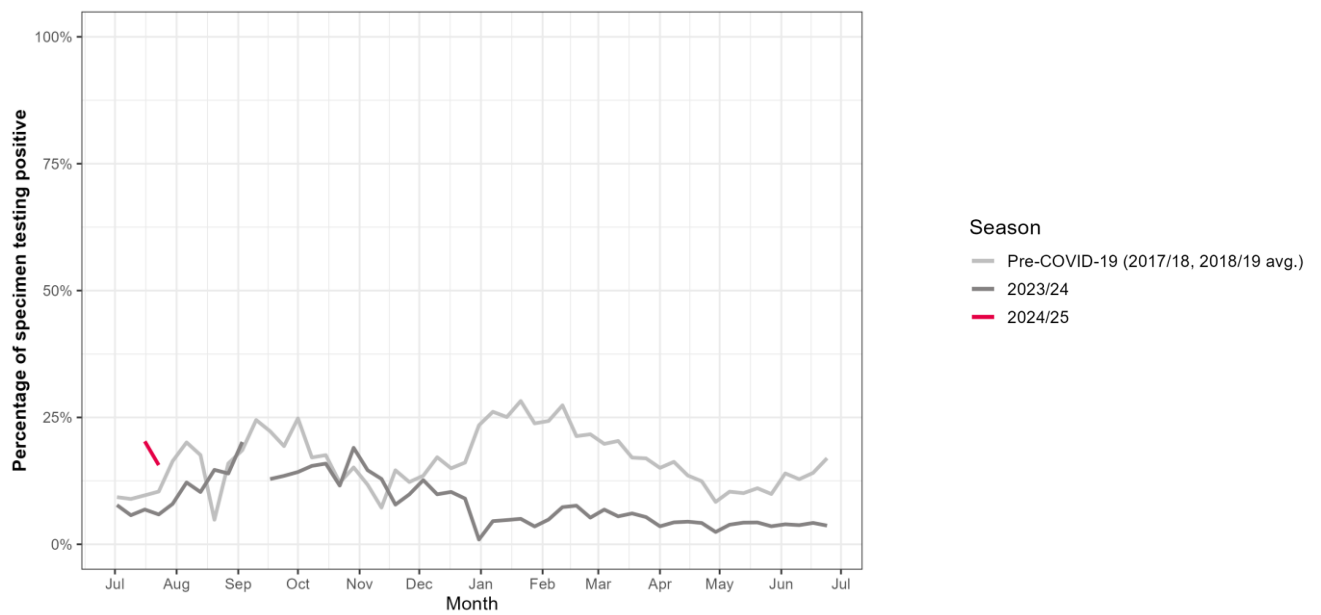


Southern Asia

India

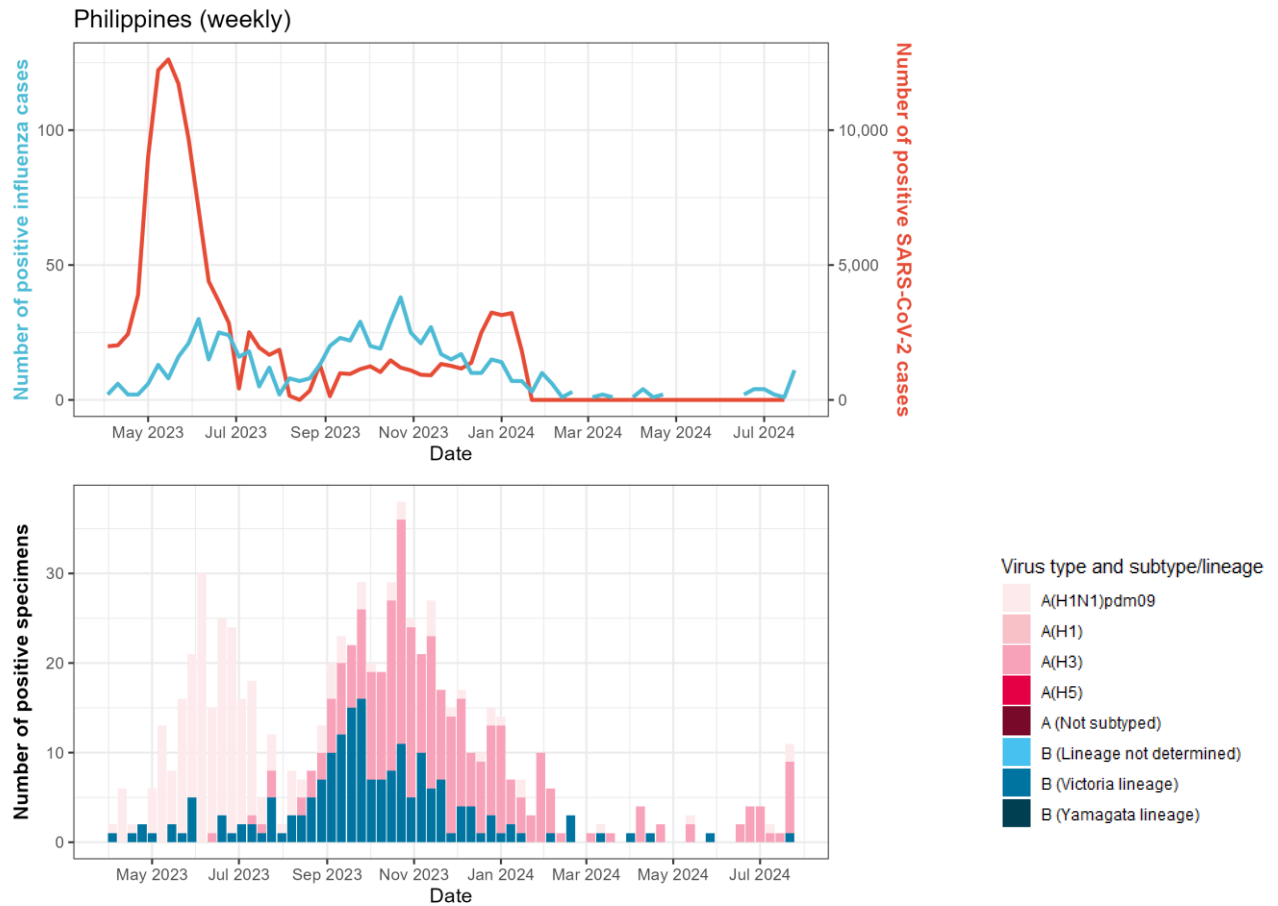


Percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza in different seasons



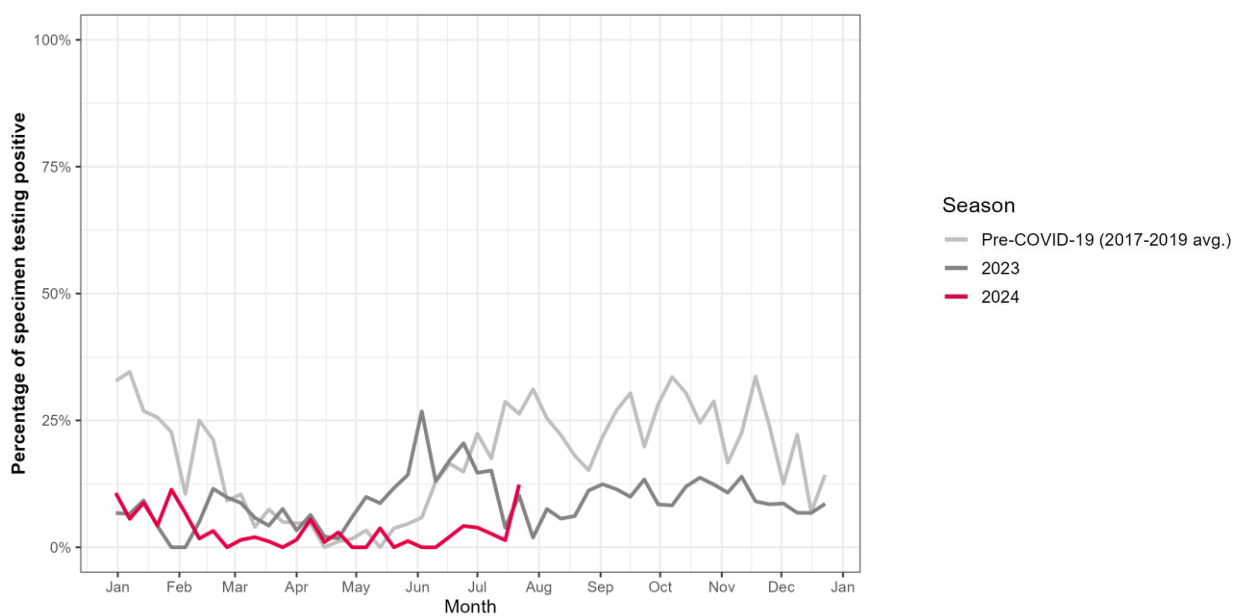
South-East Asia

Philippines

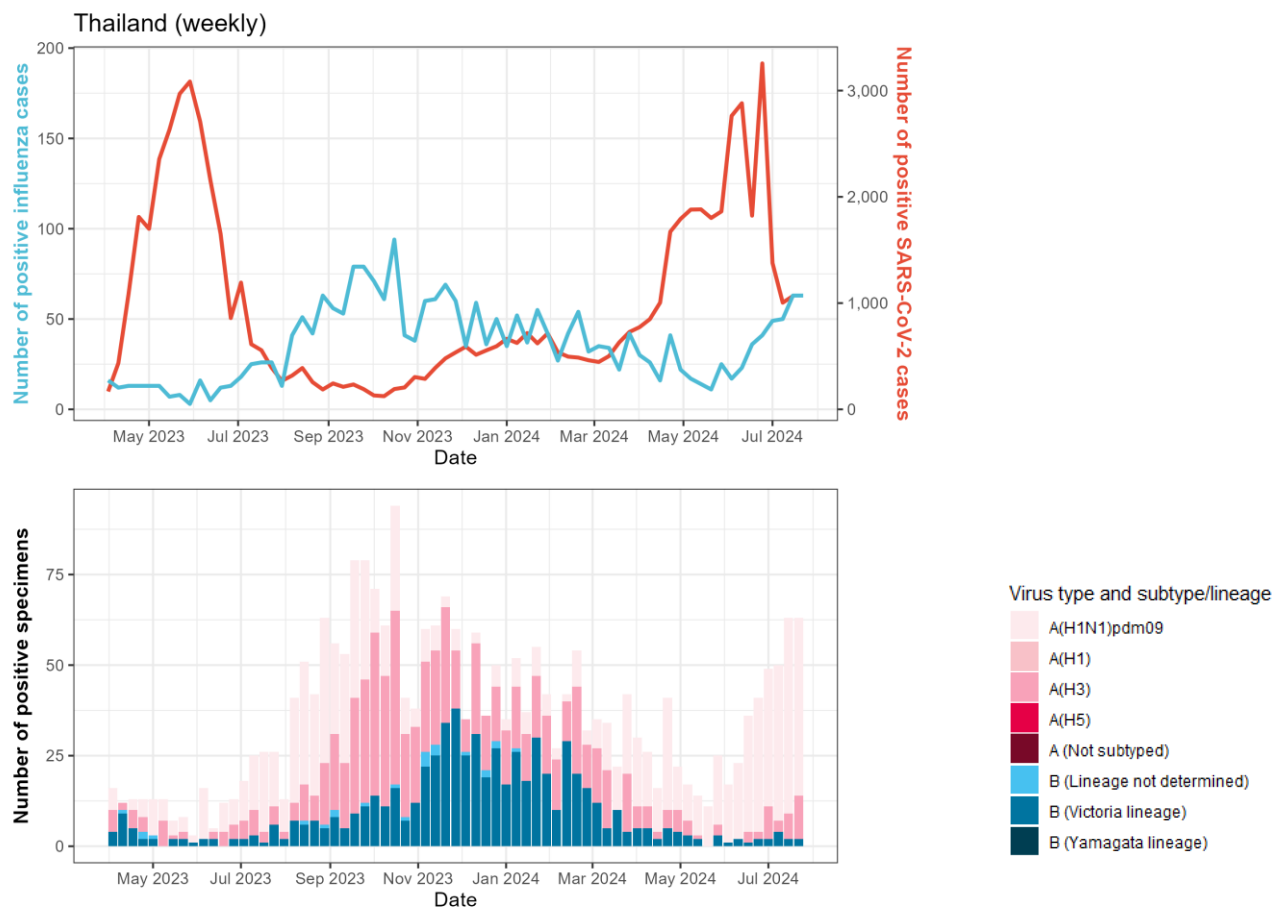


Note: the Philippines has reported zero SARS-CoV-2 activity to the WHO since W04/2024

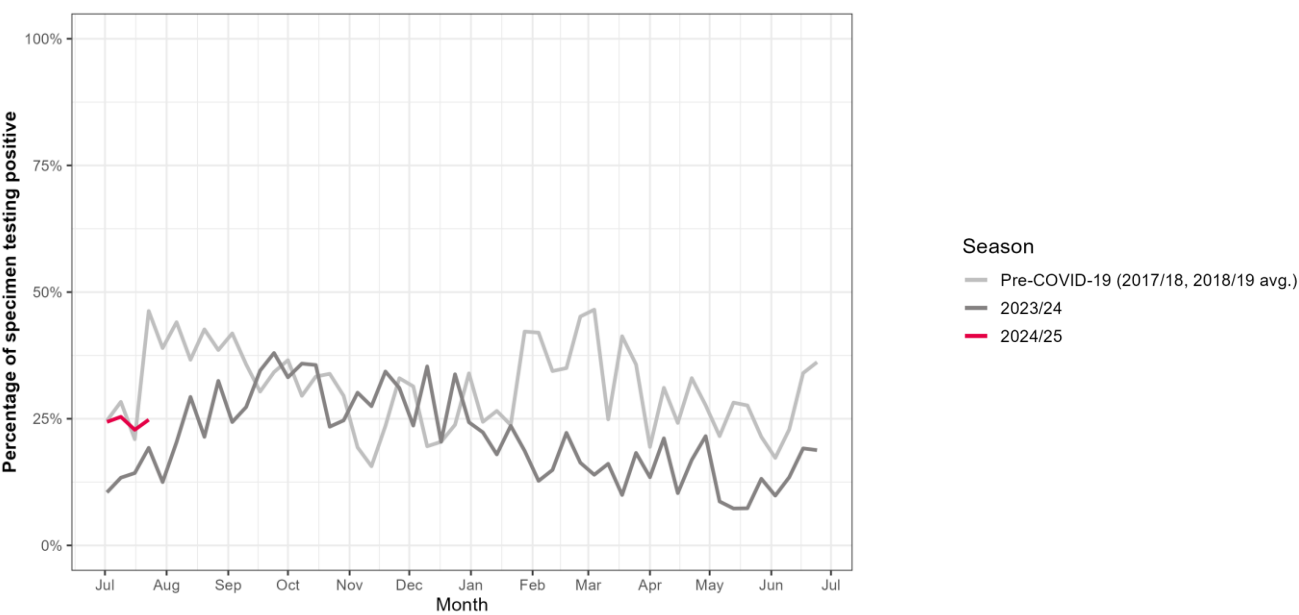
Percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza in different seasons



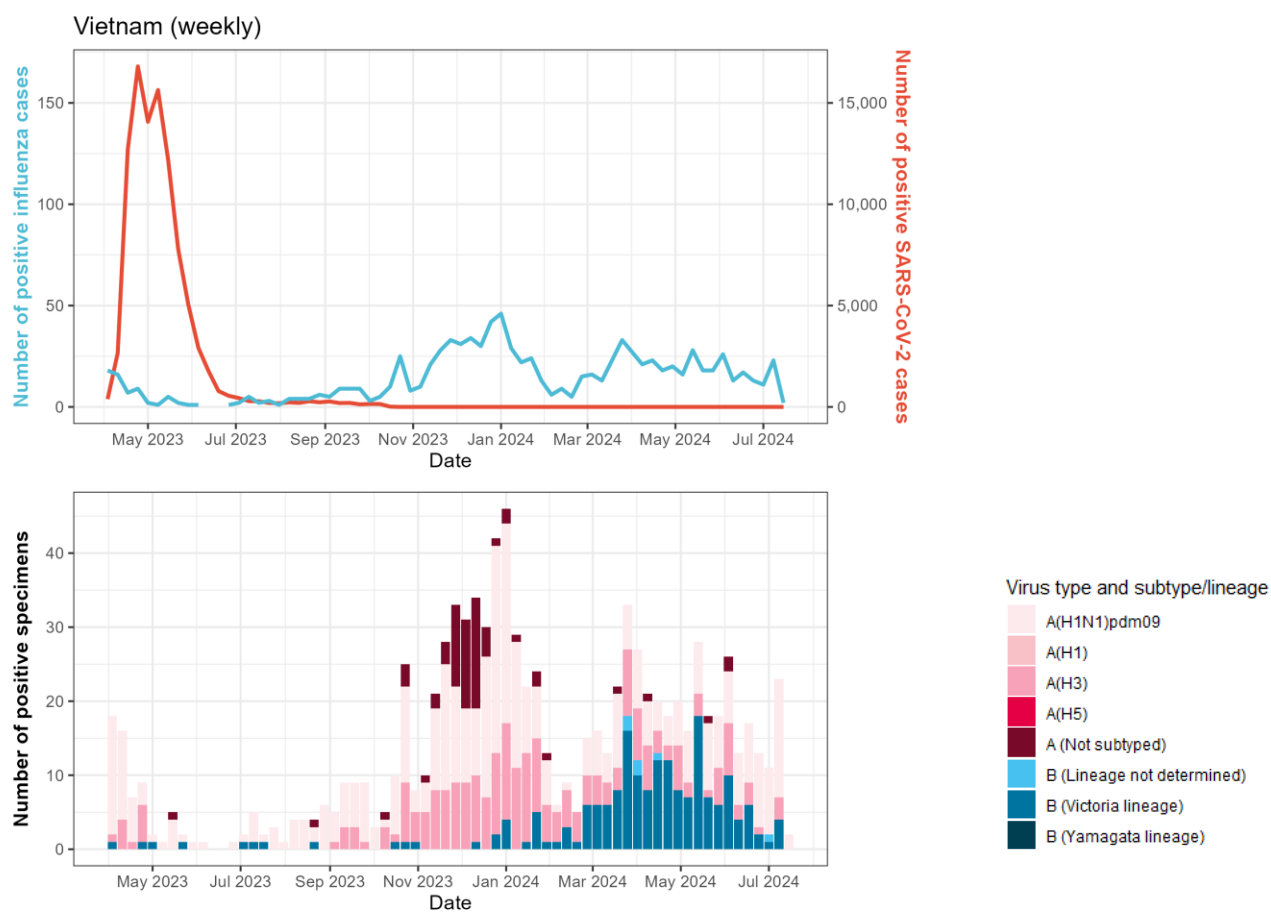
Thailand



Percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza in different seasons



Vietnam

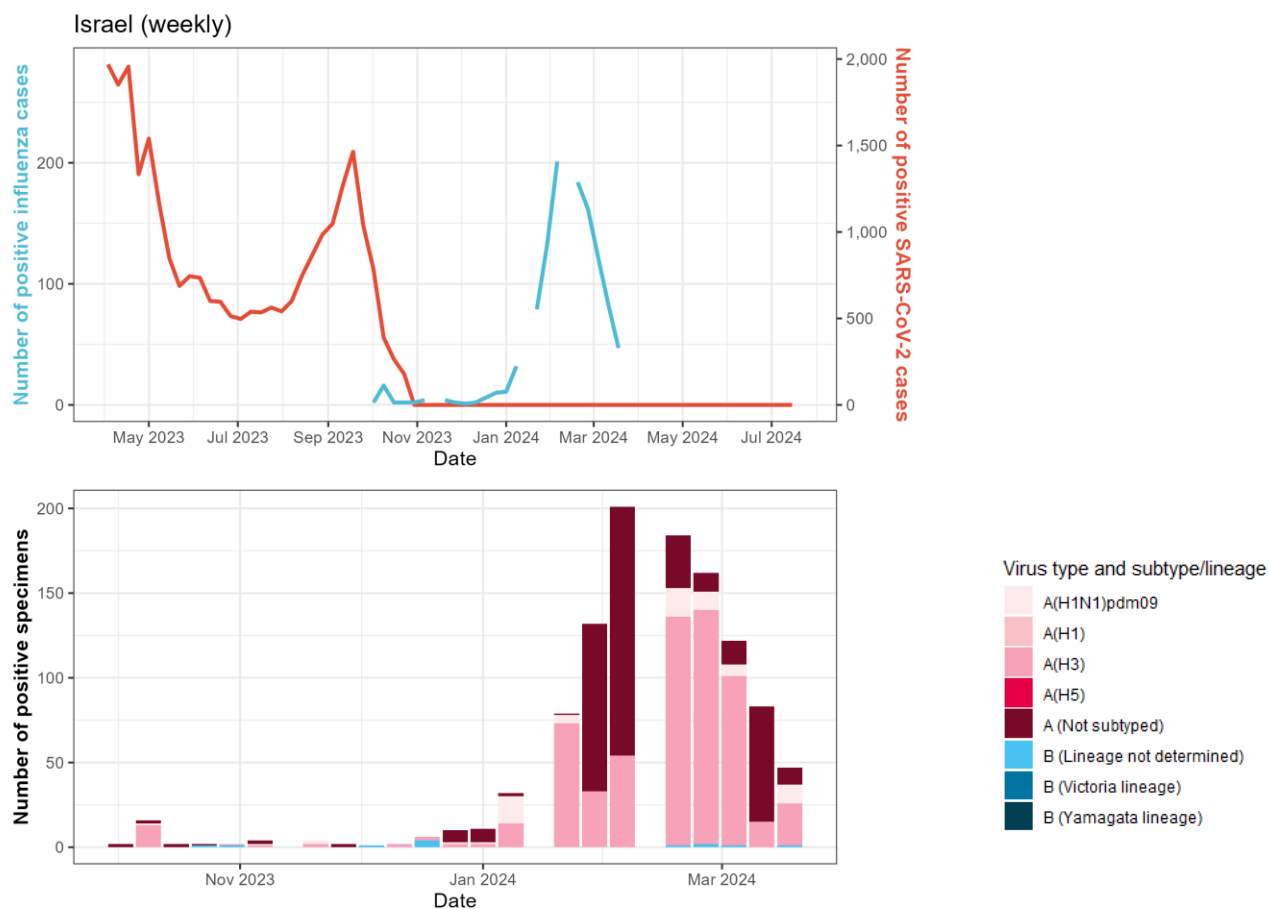


Note: Vietnam has reported zero SARS-CoV-2 activity to the WHO since W44/2023

Percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza in different seasons: data not available

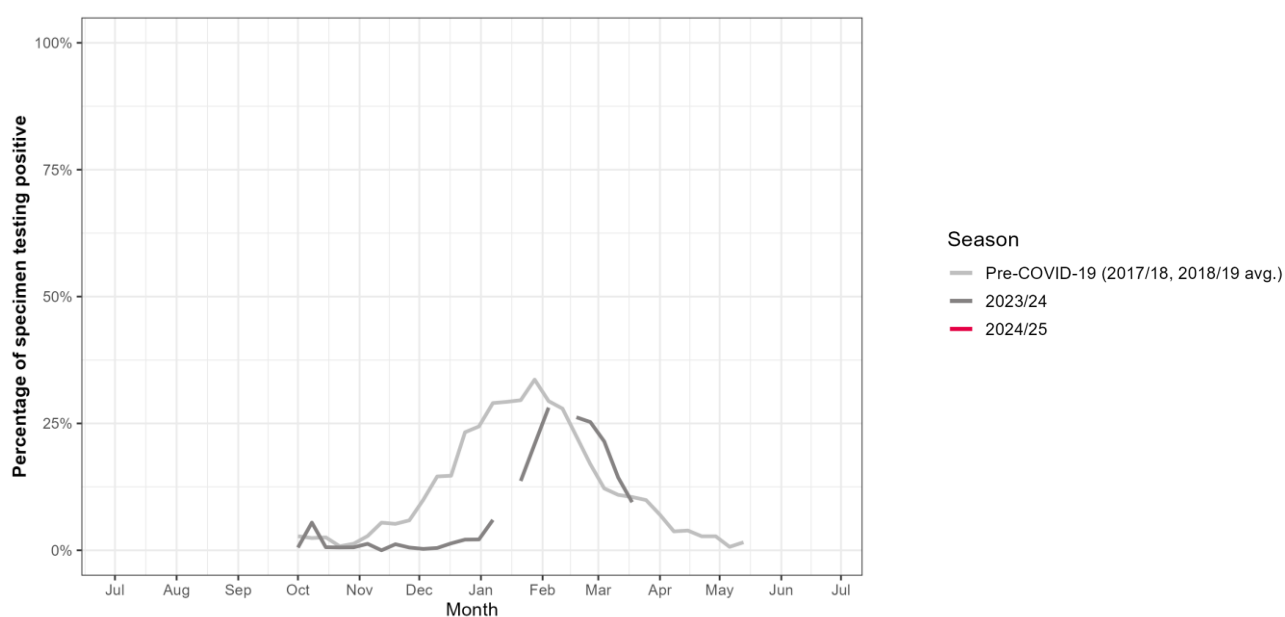
Western Asia

Israel



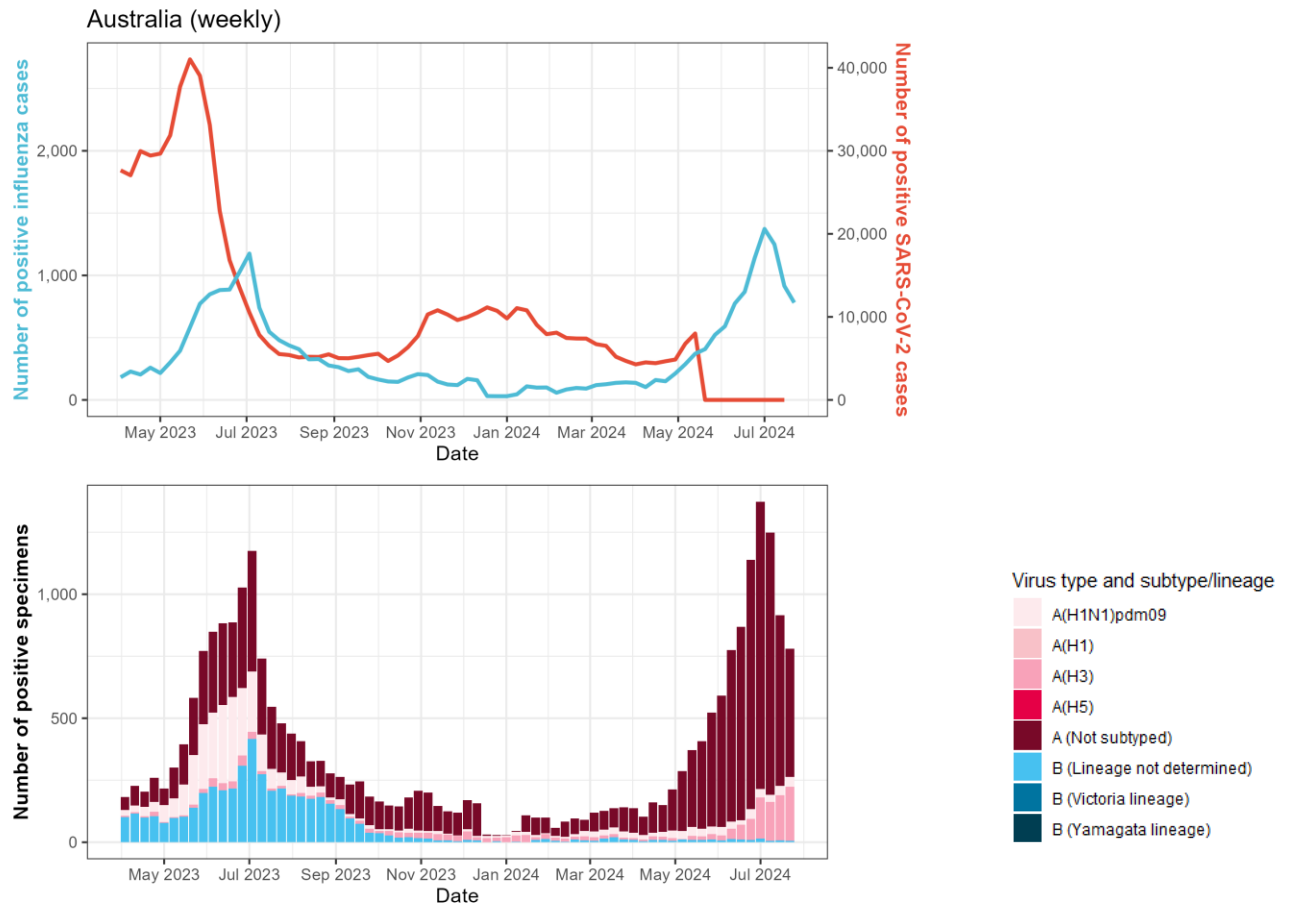
Note: Israel has reported zero SARS-CoV-2 activity to the WHO since W44/2023

Percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza in different seasons

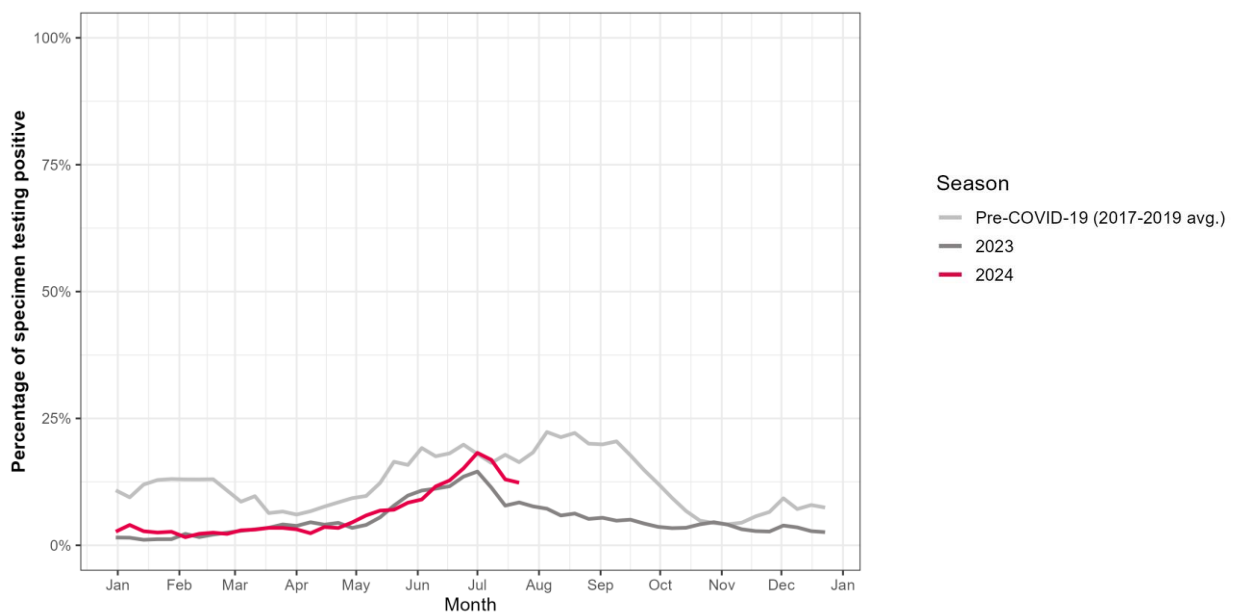


Oceania

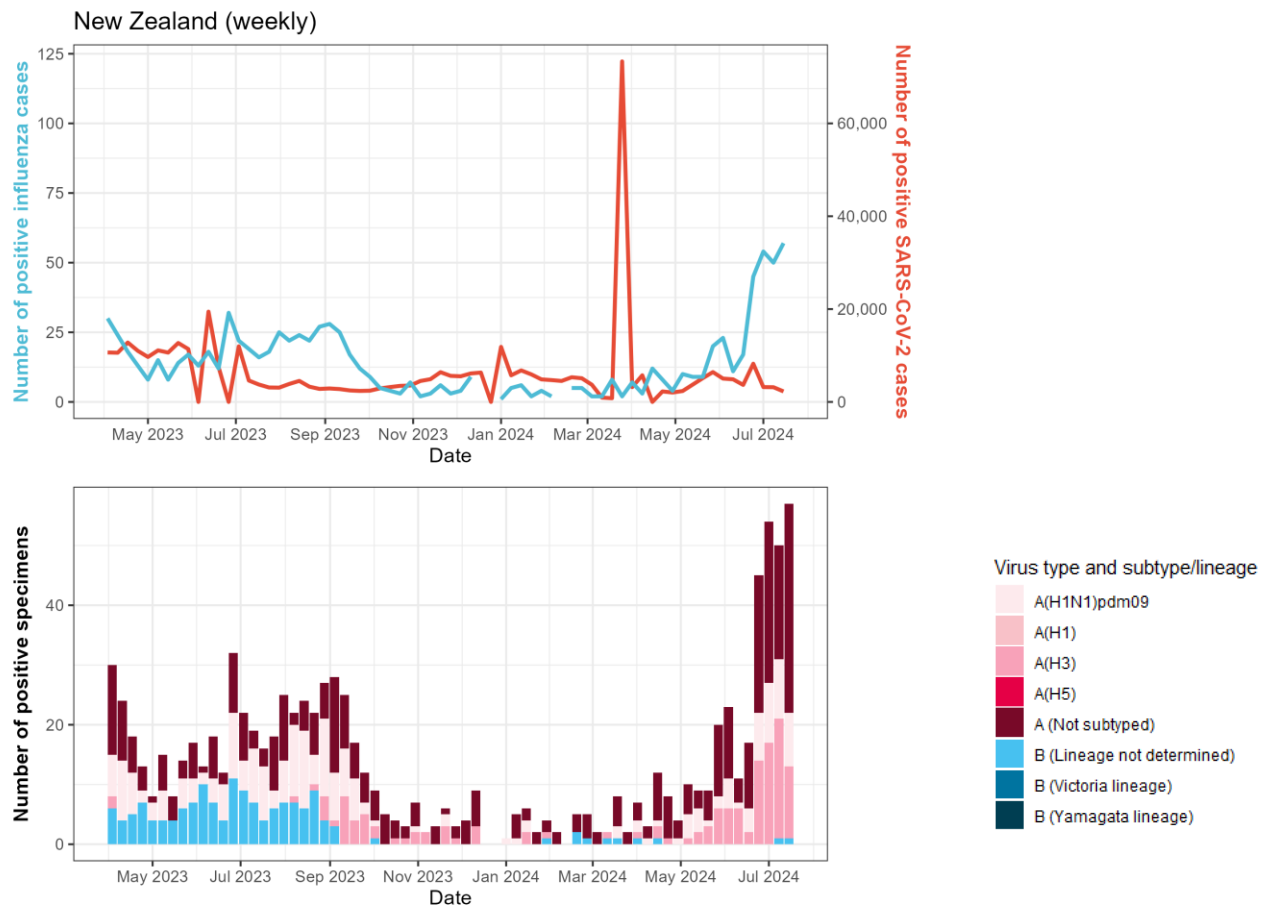
Australia



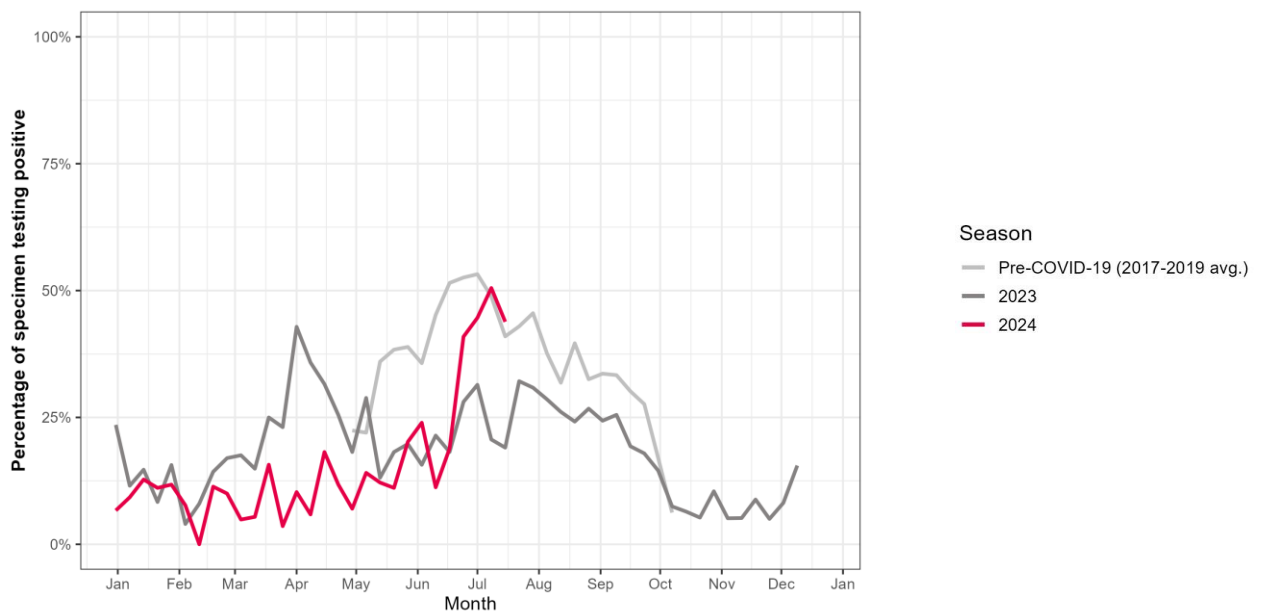
Percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza in different seasons



New Zealand



Percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza in different seasons



Absolute numbers per country

Country	Year	Cases ^{a,b} of SARS-CoV-2	+/- since last month ^c	Cases ^a of influenza	+/- since last month ^c	Week of last influenza update
Argentina	2019			6,477		
Argentina	2020	1,629,908		465		
Argentina	2021	3,930,008		29		
Argentina	2022	4,331,223		26,585		
Argentina	2023	153,818		5,618		
Argentina	2024	68,667	360	10,551	891	2024-30
Australia	2019			14,002		
Australia	2020	28,296		949		
Australia	2021	338,311		8		
Australia	2022	10,327,434		14,654		
Australia	2023	1,027,494		15,427		
Australia	2024	139,626	0	11,276	4,318	2024-30
Brazil	2019			3,459		
Brazil	2020	7,448,560		1,391		
Brazil	2021	14,782,177		1,240		
Brazil	2022	13,893,600		3,648		
Brazil	2023	1,387,584		21,939		
Brazil	2024	0	0	18,584	1,515	2024-30
Canada	2019			43,196		
Canada	2020	539,241		44,956		
Canada	2021	1,422,482		337		
Canada	2022	2,514,662		71,314		
Canada	2023	297,851		47,166		
Canada	2024	44,454	1,586	61,926	339	2024-30
Chile	2019			6,539		
Chile	2020	598,394		272		
Chile	2021	1,200,731		77		
Chile	2022	3,207,034		13,139		
Chile	2023	326,818		10,926		
Chile	2024	67,951	177	15,975	365	2024-30
China	2019			122,757		
China	2020	96,324		31,237		
China	2021	34,534		26,151		
China	2022	62,314,792		56,455		
China	2023	36,877,077		260,766		
China	2024	46,302	5,538	137,544	5,730	2024-29
Egypt	2019			1,999		
Egypt	2020	131,315		659		
Egypt	2021	249,205		233		
Egypt	2022	134,994		2,709		
Egypt	2023	509		3,074		
Egypt	2024	0	0	1,225	56	2024-30

Country	Year	Cases ^{a,b} of SARS-CoV-2	+/- since last month ^c	Cases ^a of influenza	+/- since last month ^c	Week of last influenza update
France	2019			25,405		
France	2020	2,338,258		16,589		
France	2021	6,371,668		3,071		
France	2022	29,279,621		40,148		
France	2023	1,007,943		22,690		
France	2024	0	0	22,914	20	2024-27
Germany	2019			1,215		
Germany	2020	1,660,178		958		
Germany	2021	5,353,865		29		
Germany	2022	30,227,893		1,923		
Germany	2023	1,195,820		796		
Germany	2024	0	0	1,426	3	2024-29
India	2019			10,428		
India	2020	10,187,850		655		
India	2021	24,598,952		5,128		
India	2022	9,890,304		1,948		
India	2023	336,066		3,282		
India	2024	28,020	574	1,123	270	2024-30
Israel	2019			1,796		
Israel	2020	399,105		1,424		
Israel	2021	965,663		456		
Israel	2022	3,391,936		774		
Israel	2023	84,854		1,013		
Israel	2024	0	0	1,053	0	2024-12
Italy	2019			6,361		
Italy	2020	2,039,182		7,485		
Italy	2021	3,583,249		31		
Italy	2022	19,438,072		5,817		
Italy	2023	1,601,116		5,256		
Italy	2024	66,025	0	5,064	0	2024-17
Japan	2019			10,343		
Japan	2020	217,312		2,915		
Japan	2021	1,514,477		9		
Japan	2022	26,534,616		273		
Japan	2023	5,537,167		7,752		
Japan	2024	0	0	2,974	5	2024-29
Mexico	2019			6,963		
Mexico	2020	1,453,414		4,799		
Mexico	2021	2,548,565		960		
Mexico	2022	3,243,611		10,314		
Mexico	2023	362,826		7,666		
Mexico	2024	9,269	1,347	8,285	298	2024-30

Country	Year	Cases ^{a,b} of SARS-CoV-2	+/- since last month ^c	Cases ^a of influenza	+/- since last month ^c	Week of last influenza update
Netherlands	2019			5,166		
Netherlands	2020	773,198		3,235		
Netherlands	2021	2,312,304		471		
Netherlands	2022	5,480,565		14,864		
Netherlands	2023	64,963		10,932		
Netherlands	2024	8,132	1,364	11,642	34	2024-30
New Zealand	2019			1,011		
New Zealand	2020	1,789		0		
New Zealand	2021	11,740		0		
New Zealand	2022	2,014,452		0		
New Zealand	2023	412,394		631		
New Zealand	2024	194,872	8,626	383	161	2024-29
Philippines	2019			612		
Philippines	2020	469,003		52		
Philippines	2021	2,369,471		105		
Philippines	2022	1,220,895		260		
Philippines	2023	137,910		688		
Philippines	2024	8,183	0	91	18	2024-30
Poland	2019			1,786		
Poland	2020	1,259,923		1,282		
Poland	2021	2,790,909		2		
Poland	2022	2,314,550		1,604		
Poland	2023	266,683		2,085		
Poland	2024	34,572	2,221	6,147	30	2024-30
South Africa	2019			1,164		
South Africa	2020	994,911		157		
South Africa	2021	2,413,026		413		
South Africa	2022	640,295		1,171		
South Africa	2023	24,404		1,024		
South Africa	2024	129	15	833	28	2024-30
South Korea	2019			1,702		
South Korea	2020	56,855		505		
South Korea	2021	554,812		0		
South Korea	2022	28,047,388		295		
South Korea	2023	5,912,818		2,586		
South Korea	2024	0	0	997	8	2024-30
Spain	2019			16,358		
Spain	2020	1,919,549		8,827		
Spain	2021	4,180,589		2,206		
Spain	2022	7,654,824		18,089		
Spain	2023	225,378		18,186		
Spain	2024	0	0	10,924	70	2024-30

Country	Year	Cases ^{a,b} of SARS-CoV-2	+/- since last month ^c	Cases ^a of influenza	+/- since last month ^c	Week of last influenza update
Thailand	2019			1,568		
Thailand	2020	6,142		297		
Thailand	2021	2,203,829		23		
Thailand	2022	2,511,838		575		
Thailand	2023	40,567		1,717		
Thailand	2024	35,317	3,448	1,053	225	2024-30
United Kingdom	2019			42,447		
United Kingdom	2020	2,344,433		14,373		
United Kingdom	2021	10,230,346		2,755		
United Kingdom	2022	11,584,258		79,679		
United Kingdom	2023	706,222		44,146		
United Kingdom	2024	99,532	12,681	66,902	1,963	2024-30
United States	2019			268,524		
United States	2020	18,890,446		229,766		
United States	2021	32,988,414		39,507		
United States	2022	47,140,633		469,968		
United States	2023	4,417,336		176,909		
United States	2024	0	0	254,069	0	2024-21
Vietnam	2019			355		
Vietnam	2020	1,440		146		
Vietnam	2021	1,650,233		39		
Vietnam	2022	9,872,529		399		
Vietnam	2023	99,798		596		
Vietnam	2024	0	0	548	36	2024-29

^a Laboratory-confirmed cases.

^b As of the 24th bulletin, the data source, used by Our World In Data, for SARS-CoV-2 cases has been changed retrospectively. As a result, yearly totals displayed in this table may differ from those in previous bulletins.

^c Influenza cases are reported by FluNet on a weekly basis. To convert these data to months, weekly data are assigned to the month most days in that week belong to. SARS-CoV-2 cases are reported per day and assigned to each month by date. +/- since last month includes all cases over the last full calendar month.

Methodology

Background

After assessment of alarming levels of spread and severity of SARS-CoV-2 virus, on March 11, 2020, WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic [6]. The emergence of this new virus has had a major impact on the global circulation of respiratory viruses, including influenza and RSV [1]. The FluCov project aims to understand and communicate the impact of COVID-19 on: i) influenza activity and ii) prevention and control measures (e.g. vaccination) in the coming years.

Scope

The countries included in this FluCov-Bulletin are distributed over the Americas (North, Central and Tropical South), Europe (Northern, South West and Eastern), Africa (Northern and Southern), Asia (Eastern, Southern, South East and Western) and Oceania. These data were compared to the prevention and control measures applied in each country using the Stringency Index from the Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker (OxCGRT), when this indicator was available (until 31 December 2022) [7].

Data sources

- **Influenza:** FluNet [8] is a global web-based tool for influenza virological surveillance first launched in 1997. The virological data entered into FluNet, e.g. number of influenza viruses detected by subtype, are critical for tracking the movement of viruses globally and interpreting the epidemiological data. The data are provided remotely by National Influenza Centres (NICs) of the Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS) and other national influenza reference laboratories collaborating actively with GISRS or are uploaded from WHO regional databases.
- **SARS-CoV-2:** Our World in Data systematically collects COVID-19 data which is presented in their online tool [9]. We used this platform to extract data on the number of cases, as well as tests performed per country. As of 8 March 2023, Our World in Data changed their primary data source from the John Hopkins repository on daily confirmed COVID-19 cases to the WHO [10].
- **Government response tracker:** The Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker (OxCGRT) [7] systematically collects information on several different common policy responses that governments have taken to respond to the pandemic on 20 indicators such as school closures and travel restrictions. It now has data from more than 180 countries. OxCGRT data is downloaded directly from the Our World in Data platform.

Extraction details

Data were extracted on 5 August 2024 and cover the period 1 January 2019 to 28 July 2024 (influenza) and 21 July 2024 (SARS-CoV-2). Data from both platforms are regularly updated and **sometimes retrospectively corrected**. This might explain any discrepancies between our reported figures and the data published online, even when referring to the exact same period. In case of any unclear details or perceived irregularities, feel free to contact us at flucov@nivel.nl.

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Websites

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

FluCoV Dashboard: <https://www.nivel.nl/en/dossier-epidemiology-respiratory-viruses/fluCoV-dashboard>

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