

ECDC EXECUTIVE UPDATE

2009 pandemic influenza A(H1N1)

Issue 34

Tuesday, 06 April 2010

Weekly influenza surveillance overview highlights

- For the fourth consecutive week, all 24 reporting countries experienced low intensity of influenza activity.
- Of the 293 specimens collected by sentinel physicians from patient with influenza-like illness, only 24 (8.2%) were positive for influenza virus. Although the pandemic virus predominated, influenza B viruses are circulating as well.
- The number of reported cases of Severe Acute Respiratory Infection, SARI, continued to be low, with only 13 cases reported during week 12/2010.
- Even though the world remains in pandemic Phase 6, influenza activity caused by the 2009 pandemic influenza A(H1N1) virus is well past its winter peak in EU/EEA countries. However, transmission of the pandemic virus and B influenza viruses continues at low levels. Most cases of influenza-like illness in EU/EEA countries are currently not due to influenza virus infection.

The [ECDC Weekly influenza surveillance overview](#) is published on Friday afternoons on ECDC web page (see 'latest publications').

Updates from *Eurosurveillance*

In *Eurosurveillance*, [Volume 15, Issue 12, 25 March 2010](#), the following article related to the 2009 influenza A(H1N1) pandemic was published (click title to access article):

Perspectives:

[Risk groups and other target groups – preliminary ECDC guidance for developing influenza vaccination recommendations for the season 2010-11](#)

H Nokleby, A Nicoll

Past meetings and events

22–23 March: ECDC took part in a meeting on the pandemic response at the Robert Koch Institute, Germany

22 March: ECDC participated in a meeting on lessons learned related to the pandemic influenza A(H1N1) organised by the Belgian authorities, Brussels.

29 March: ECDC participated in a meeting on the use of pandemic vaccines organised by the European Medicines Agency (EMA), London.

Upcoming meetings and events

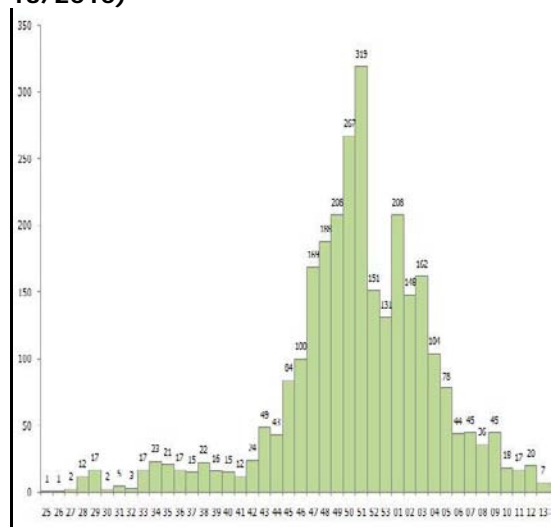
12 April: ECDC will participate in a work shop on the behavioural aspects of influenza A(H1N1), London.

13-15 April: ECDC will participate as an observer at a meeting of the Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) on immunisation organised by the World Health Organization, WHO, Geneva

14 April: ECDC will attend a meeting at the Lithuanian Parliament on the pandemic response in Lithuania.

European epidemiology

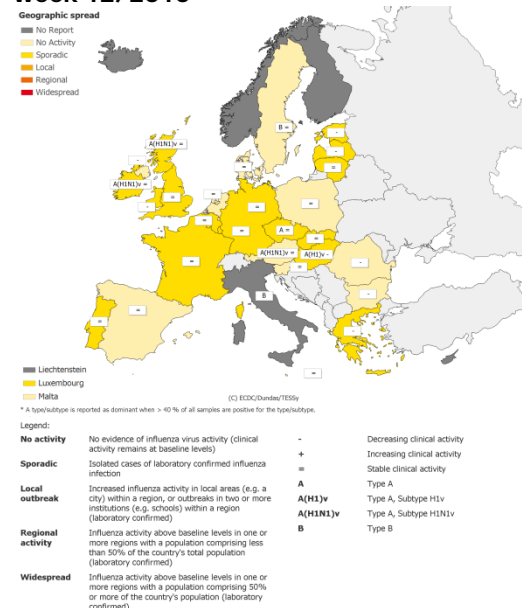
Figure 1: Deaths reported among 2009 pandemic influenza A(H1N1) cases in EU and EFTA countries (from week 25/2009 to week 13/2010)



This figure shows a weekly number of deaths from mid-October onwards.

Source: [ECDC 2009 influenza A\(H1N1\) pandemic web page](#)

Map 1: Geographic spread distribution map week 12/2010



This map shows how widespread influenza activity was in most European countries during week 12/2010.

Source: [ECDC Weekly influenza surveillance overview](#) of 01 April 2010

Table 1: Countries reporting community incidence in Week 12/2010

Rising trend	Stable	Declining trend
	Austria	Malta
	Belgium	Netherlands
	Czech Republic	Poland
	Denmark	Portugal
	France	Slovakia
	Germany	Slovenia
	Ireland	Spain
	Lithuania	Sweden
	Luxembourg	UK- England & Scotland
		Bulgaria
		Estonia
		Greece
		Hungary
		Latvia
		Romania
		UK- Northern Ireland & Wales

Source: ECDC Weekly influenza surveillance overview, [1 April 2010](#)

European surveillance

Preliminary ECDC guidance for developing influenza vaccination recommendations for the season 2010–11 – risk groups and other target groups

On 25 March 2010, an article on 'Risk groups and other target groups – preliminary ECDC guidance for developing influenza vaccination recommendations for the season 2010-11' was published in Eurosurveillance, volume 15, issue 12.

The article provides preliminary ECDC guidance and highlights the uncertainties arising over risk and target groups for seasonal influenza immunisation for the 2010-11 season. Identifying potential risk groups and target groups is important as in European countries the influenza vaccination strategy is based on protecting the vulnerable.

A more rigorous approach is being developed to produce annual evidence-based guidance on risk and target groups for influenza vaccination.

See the [preliminary ECDC guidance](#) for details and further information.

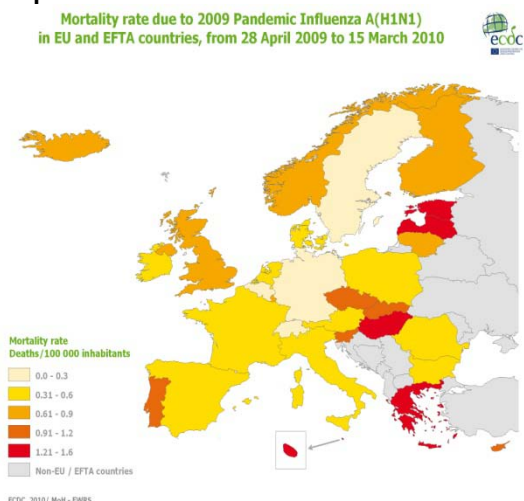
See also the [ECDC Forward Look Risk Assessment](#) for what can most reasonably be expected from the first half of 2010 to the end of the 2010/11 influenza season.

Vaccination remains the most potent countermeasure for any human influenza. Given the significant risks to health from the pandemic, ECDC would strongly advise all Europeans who are offered the vaccine to be vaccinated. By being vaccinated you protect not just your own health, but that of the people around you.

For further information on pandemic vaccines, please see the article '[Pandemic influenza A\(H1N1\) 2009 vaccines in the European Union](#)' by K Johansen, A Nicoll, BC Ciancio and P Kramarz, published in Eurosurveillance on 15 October 2009. An update on authorised vaccines are provided in the ECDC Q&As on vaccines and vaccination [for experts](#) and for the [general public](#) and can be found on the ECDC 2009 pandemic influenza A(H1N1) web page.

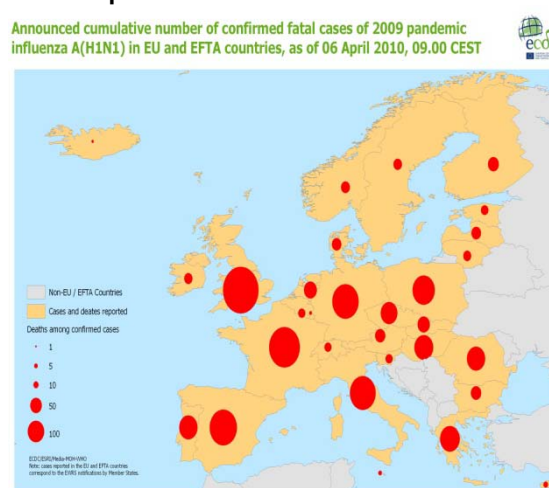
Other effective countermeasures: The usual hygiene and personal measures should continue to be promoted. These include regular hand washing, using tissues and staying at home if sick. There is very little resistance to the drugs used against seasonal influenza (oseltamivir and zanamivir) and treatment with antivirals is working, especially if given early.

Map 2: Mortality rate due to 2009 pandemic influenza A(H1N1) in EU and EFTA countries, 28 April 2009–15 March 2010



This map shows how countries in Western Europe have been affected. **Source:** [ECDC 2009 influenza A\(H1N1\) pandemic web page](#)

Map 3: ECDC reported number deaths due to 2009 pandemic influenza A(H1N1) in Europe as of 6 April 2010



This map shows how countries in Western Europe have been affected. **Source:** [ECDC 2009 influenza A\(H1N1\) pandemic web page](#)

Note: the ECDC Executive Update is now published on a monthly basis.