

ECDC EXECUTIVE UPDATE

2009 pandemic influenza A(H1N1)

Issue 33

Monday, 8 March 2010

Weekly influenza surveillance overview highlights

- Influenza activity caused by the 2009 pandemic influenza A(H1N1) virus is well past its winter peak in EU/EFTA countries. Of the 25 countries reporting this week, all but one (Greece) reported low intensity.
- During week 08/2010, an increasing trend, but at a low level of activity, was observed in Latvia, Lithuania and Poland.
- Regional spread was reported in Austria, Greece and Italy and local geographic spread was reported by Malta and Slovakia.
- Of the 449 specimens collected by sentinel physicians, 26 (5.8%) were positive for influenza virus of which most were pandemic A(H1N1). This low percentage is slightly higher than the previous week. Only Sweden reported influenza B virus as dominant.
- The number of reported SARI cases and associated deaths continues to decline. Of the 11 SARI cases for whom possible underlying conditions were documented, eight had no underlying conditions.

The [ECDC Weekly influenza surveillance overview](#) is published on Friday afternoons on the 2009 pandemic influenza A(H1N1) web page (see 'latest publications').

Updates from *Eurosurveillance*

In *Eurosurveillance*, [Volume 15, Issue 9, 04 March 2010](#), the following articles related to the 2009 influenza A(H1N1) pandemic were published (click title to access article):

Rapid communications:

[Observed association between the HA1 mutation D222G in the 2009 pandemic influenza A\(H1N1\) virus and severe clinical outcome, Norway 2009-2010](#)

A Kilander, R Rykkvin, S G Dudman, O Hungnes.

Letters:

[Estimating the impact of the 2009 influenza A\(H1N1\) pandemic on mortality in the elderly in Navarre, Spain](#)

L Jossieran, A Fouillet.

Past meetings and events

3 March: ECDC participated in the EU Health Working Party meeting to present ECDC's Forward Look on Influenza for 2010, Brussels.

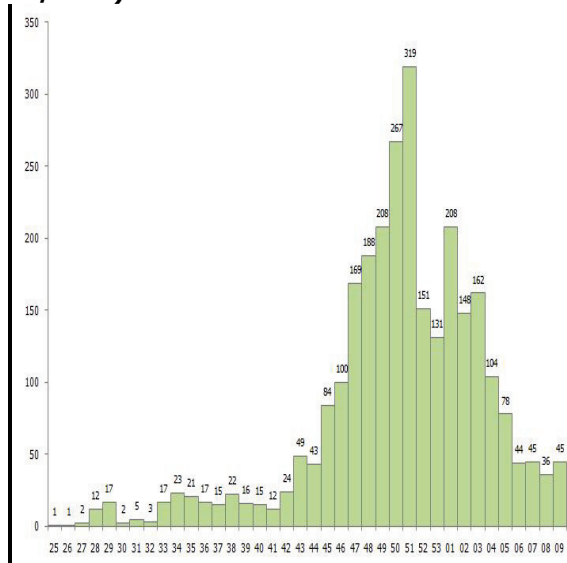
4–5 March: ECDC participated in a Steering Group meeting for the European Commission Evaluation of the Pandemic Response (Vaccination), London

Upcoming meetings and events

22–23 March: ECDC will participate in a meeting on the Pandemic response at the Robert Koch Institute, Germany

European epidemiology

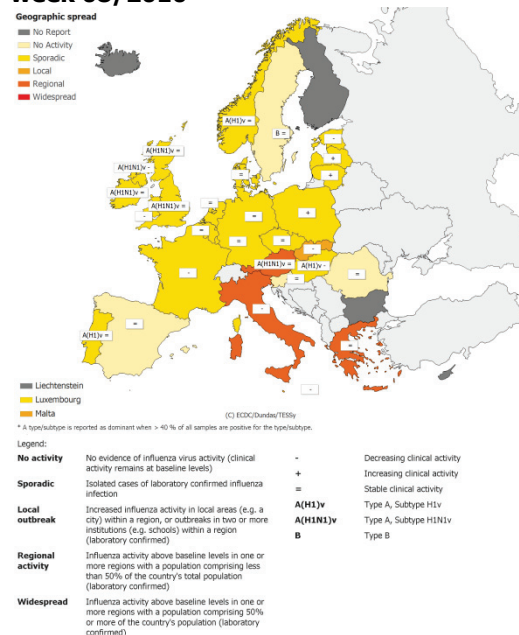
Figure 1: Deaths reported among 2009 pandemic influenza A(H1N1) cases in EU and EFTA countries (from week 25/2009 to week 09/2010)



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 08/2010



This map shows how widespread influenza activity was in most European countries during week 08/2010.

Source: [ECDC Weekly influenza surveillance overview](#) of 5 March 2010

Table 1: Countries reporting community incidence in Week 08/2010

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

Source: ECDC Weekly influenza surveillance overview, [5 March 2010](#)

European surveillance

ECDC Forward Look Risk Assessment for Influenza

On 8 March 2010, ECDC published its Forward Look Risk Assessment on Influenza. This risk assessment was produced to determine what can most reasonably be expected from the first half of 2010 to the end of the 2010/11 influenza season.

The purpose of the ECDC risk assessment is also to identify any additional information that needs to be gathered through surveillance and research in order to determine vaccine strategies, including implementation of the new EU Health Council recommendation on seasonal influenza immunisation.

On the basis of the evidence, data and information considered from a number of sources, it seems unlikely that there will be another spring/summer pandemic wave in Europe unless there are significant, unrecognised uninfected populations, or the virus changes and becomes more transmissible.

However, it seems very likely that Europe will continue to experience low level transmission and small outbreaks of the 2009 pandemic influenza A(H1N1) for the duration of 2010. Larger outbreaks cannot be excluded given the lack of seroepidemiological information.

Epidemic transmission of the pandemic virus is highly likely in the 2010/2011 winter season, at least in very young children and other susceptible individuals. It is also very likely that the 2009 influenza pandemic virus will become the dominant pandemic virus in the coming winter season along with influenza B viruses, though the presence of influenza A(H3N2) viruses cannot presently be excluded. By the winter season, Europe will probably be referring to the combination as the 'new seasonal influenza'.

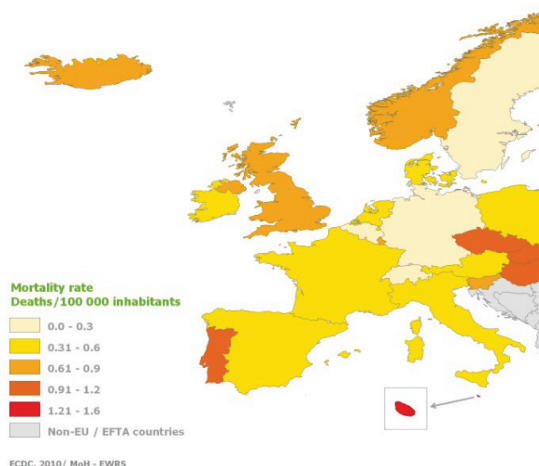
See the [ECDC Forward Look Risk Assessment](#) for details and further information.

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. The ECDC Q&As on vaccines and vaccination [for experts](#) and for the [general public](#) 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; however, the seasonal influenza vaccine gives little protection against 2009 pandemic influenza A(H1N1) virus.

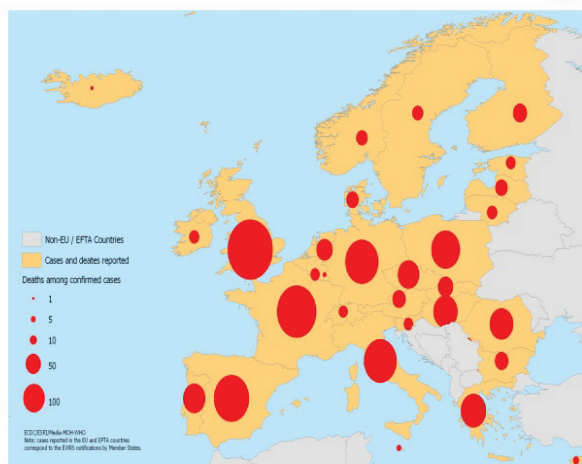
Map 2: Mortality rate due to 2009 pandemic influenza A(H1N1) in EU and EFTA countries, 28 April 2009–12 February 2010



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

Note: From this date forward, the ECDC Executive Update will be published on a monthly basis.

Map 3: ECDC reported number deaths due to 2009 pandemic influenza A(H1N1) in Europe as of 8 March 2010



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