

ARMENIA



A photo taken during the 2014–2015 National Awareness Campaign in Kotayq marz.

OVERVIEW

In 2006, the State Hygiene and Anti-Epidemic Inspectorate (SHA EI) of the Ministry of Health (MOH) in Armenia began a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to develop and enhance influenza surveillance and laboratory capacity. Since 2010, Armenia has conducted surveillance for both influenza-like illness (ILI) and severe acute respiratory infection (SARI) in the cities of Yerevan, Kapan (Syunik marz) and Vanadzor (Lori marz) and the sentinel surveillance system now includes a fully functioning PCR laboratory in each city. With a focus on avian and human influenza, Armenia's epidemiological surveillance capacity has been enhanced since the beginning of the partnership with CDC.

SURVEILLANCE

The influenza sentinel system in Armenia is integrated into the general epidemiological surveillance system of infectious diseases. ILI sentinel surveillance includes six polyclinics: two sites in Yerevan, and one site each in Vanadzor, Kapan, ljevan, and Nairi. SARI sentinel surveillance includes 11 hospitals: seven in Yerevan, and one each in Vanadzor, Kapan, ljevan and Nairi. The sentinel sites include one pediatric (Yerevan), one maternity (Yerevan), two

HIGHLIGHTS

- Established new ILI and SARI sentinel sites in the cities of ljevan (Tavush region), near the busiest border crossing area in the country, and in Nairi (Kotayq region), where the main poultry trade centers are located.
- Organized and executed an influenza awareness campaign, including printed and Internet ads, articles, TV and radio public announcements, and national special events throughout the influenza season.
- Submitted influenza samples to the WHO CC in London annually; 40 samples submitted from the 2013–2014 season.

adult (Yerevan) and seven general (Yerevan, Vanadzor and Kapan) hospitals. Each hospital has doctors in key departments designated as surveillance doctors.

SURVEILLANCE ACTIVITIES

- Conducted supervisory visits at sentinel surveillance sites in Yerevan, Vanadzor (Lori marz), Kapan (Syunik marz), ljevan (Tavush marz) and Nairi (Kotayq marz).
- Established an internet connection for all organizations participating in sentinel surveillance and the sanitary-quarantine border posts (approximately 35 different sites).

LABORATORY

During 2014 and 2015, the National Reference Virology Laboratory at CDC/Yerevan underwent significant renovations, with the virology laboratory relocated to a different part of the building and refurbished with a new design and equipment. Renovations are expected to be complete in 2016. The laboratory is continuing preparatory work to introduce influenza virus isolation and typing using current World Health Organization (WHO) reagents and techniques. After implementing virus isolation, the laboratory aims to begin the process of formal recognition as a National Influenza Laboratory in Armenia.



A poster in Armenian, prepared and distributed during the National Awareness Campaign.



The 2014–2015 National Awareness Campaign in Aragacotn marz where the latest information on influenza was provided to medical practitioners (family doctors, pediatricians, school and kindergarten doctors and nurses).

LABORATORY ACTIVITIES

- Tested a total of 825 samples during the 2014–2015 influenza season: 587 samples by the CDC/Yerevan laboratory, 121 samples by the Lori marz laboratory and 117 by the Syuniq marz laboratory.
- Tested a total of 478 samples during the 2013–2014 influenza season: 348 samples by Yerevan 40 samples by Lori marz and 97 from Syunik marz.
- Completed minor renovation of the virology laboratory in Syunik marz, including changing utility services and ensuring availability of gas.
- Submitted data to WHO on a regular basis.

PREPAREDNESS

A monitoring and evaluation exercise was conducted by CDC/Yerevan experts, including the Project Team Leader, an Expert/Consultant, a WHO Country Office representative, and other Armenian WHO focal points on influenza epidemiology and virology.

PREPAREDNESS ACTIVITIES

- Conducted awareness-raising workshops in all marzes of Armenia. Workshops for school personnel and kindergartens (e.g. teachers, caretakers, nurses) covered 624 people. Workshops for hospital medical personnel and polyclinics (e.g. pediatricians, family doctors, general physicians), covered 950 people.

TRAINING

- Conducted trainings for sentinel site personnel on SARI case management, sampling and testing based on WHO and CDC recommendations. The trainings were held in all regions of Armenia and were attended by 444 people.

INFLUENZA VACCINE ACTIVITIES

No influenza vaccine activities were planned during this time.