



SARI*net*

**LABORATORY NETWORK
MEETING
AGENDA**

28–30 October 2020

VIRTUAL MEETING



PAHO

SARI*net*

Severe Acute Respiratory Infections network

Laboratory Network Meeting

Virtual meeting, 28–30 October 2020

FINAL AGENDA

BACKGROUND

The *Severe Acute Respiratory Infections Network* (SARInet) was created to strengthen the surveillance of influenza and other respiratory viruses (ORV) in the Americas through the collaboration among countries, PAHO and partners. Laboratory workup plays a key part not only in determining the specific etiology of respiratory infections, but also for the early detection of emerging respiratory viruses with pandemic potential.

Most laboratories in the SARInet network are also part of the WHO's Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS) laboratory network. Besides their role in laboratory diagnostic and virologic surveillance of influenza and ORV, these laboratories were also leveraged and have become a cornerstone of SARS-CoV-2 diagnosis and virologic surveillance and thus to the COVID-19 pandemic response.

PAHO and WHO have focused on building capacity for virologic surveillance and on improving the frequency, quantity and quality of the data that are shared through GISRS. Within the global network, National Influenza Centers (NIC) and National Public Health Laboratories (NPHL) serve as technical reference point within the country. Several WHO Collaborating Centers, such as the one at the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, are integral elements of GISRS.

As part of the COVID-19 response, PAHO has supported Member States in implementing SARS-CoV-2 molecular detection and genetic sequencing, providing supplies and advising the integration of COVID-19 surveillance into existing sentinel surveillance systems for influenza and ORV. While laboratories still face great technical and operational challenges due to the ongoing the COVID-19 pandemic response challenges stresses, it is also important to map a sustainable path forward. Several issues are of relevance, such as testing algorithms that include both influenza viruses and SARS-CoV-2 and the potential co-circulation of these viruses.

OBJECTIVES:

- Review and discuss current challenges for influenza, SARS-CoV-2 and ORV laboratory workup within the framework of national surveillance systems
- Update knowledge on the diagnostic approaches and specific assays for influenza viruses and SARS-CoV-2
- Present and discuss options for SARS-CoV-2 integration into influenza virologic surveillance
- Review NICs' terms of reference, particularly on virus sharing, data reporting and the External Quality Assessment Program for NIC/NPHL

PROGRAM

DAY 1 (28 October)		
TIME	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE
SESSION I: INAUGURATION / OPENING REMARKS		
10:00-10:10	Welcome and opening remarks	Dr. Sylvain Aldighieri, PAHO
10:10-10:15	Objectives and expected results	Dr. Andrea Vicari, PAHO
SESSION II: OPENING SESSION		
Moderator: Dr. Jairo Mendez, PAHO		
10:15-10:30	Influenza surveillance system: Leveraging GISRS for COVID-19 surveillance	Dr. Dmitriy Pereyaslov, WHO
10:30-10:45	SARI/ILI & COVID-19 surveillance in the Americas	Dr. Andrea Vicari, PAHO
10:45-10:55	Break	
SESSION III: LABORATORY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE		
Moderator: Dr. Juliana Leite, PAHO		
10:55-11:10	COVID-19 laboratory response in the Americas: Lessons learned	Dr. Jairo Mendez, PAHO
11:10-11:25	Laboratory surveillance of seasonal and potential pandemic influenza viruses: Role of the WHO Collaborating Center	Dr. Xiyan Xu, US CDC / WHO Collaborating Centre
11:25-11:55	WHO Reference Laboratories for SARS-CoV-2 in the Americas (15' each) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FIOCRUZ – Brazil • InDRE – Mexico 	Brazil Mexico
11:55 – 13:30	Plenary discussions	

DAY 2 (29 October)		
TIME	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE
SESSION VI: SARS-CoV-2 SPECIFIC DIAGNOSTIC		
Moderator: Dr. Juliana Leite, PAHO		
10:00-10:20	Quality management and laboratory biosafety in context of SARS-CoV-2 circulation	Dr. Jean-Marc Gabastou, PAHO
10:20-10:40	Updates on SARS-CoV-2 diagnostic methods/assays	Dr. Jairo Mendez, PAHO
10:40 – 11:00	Discussions	ALL
11:00-11:10	Break	
SESSION VI: RESPIRATORY VIRUSES DIAGNOSTIC		
Moderator: Dr. Lionel Gresh, PAHO		
11:10-11:25	Recommendations on influenza, SARS-CoV-2 and non-influenza respiratory virus testing algorithm	Dr. Juliana Leite, PAHO
11:25-11:45	Influenza real-time RT-PCR updates: molecular typing and subtyping using IRR/CDC assay	Dr. John Barnes, CDC
11:45-12:05	Multiplex strategy for detecting Influenza and SARS-CoV-2 viruses	Dr. John Barnes, CDC
12:05-13:00	Plenary discussions	

DAY 3 (30 October)		
TIME	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBLE
SESSION V: RESPIRATORY VIRUSES CHARACTERIZATION		
Moderator: Dr. Lionel Gresh, PAHO		
10:00-10:10	WHO guidance for sharing seasonal influenza viruses	Dr. Juliana Leite, PAHO
10:10-10:30	Genetic and antigenic characterization of influenza viruses WHO vaccine strain selection for SH 2021	Dr. Rebecca Kondor, CDC
10:30-10:40	SARS-CoV-2 Proficiency Testing: WHO EQAP	Dr. Jairo Mendez, PAHO
10:40-11:00	COVID-19 Genomic Surveillance Regional Network	Dr. Juliana Leite, PAHO
11:00-11:30	Roundtable on respiratory virus genetic sequencing (10' minutes each): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country experience on influenza genetic surveillance • Country experience on SARS-CoV-2 Next Generation Sequencing • Country experience on RSV sequencing 	Argentina Chile Brazil
11:30-11:45	Plenary discussion	
11:45-11:55	Break	
SESSION VI: REPIRATORY VIRUS LABORATORY SURVEILLANCE		
Moderator: Dr. Jairo Mendez, PAHO		
11:55-12:50	Addressing countries challenges for influenza and ORV surveillance in the region: open discussion	PAHO
12:50-13:00	Closing remarks	PAHO