



Joint SARInet / REVELAC-i Regional Meeting

“Leveraging influenza surveillance and immunization toward COVID-19 pandemic control”

16–18 September 2020, 10:00am–12:30/1:00pm (EDT time, Washington time)

Virtual meeting via Zoom link

Agenda

Background

For the past two decades, countries in the Americas, PAHO and key partners have collaborated towards a reliable regional system for the surveillance of influenza and other respiratory viruses (ORV), including for laboratory diagnostics. This collaboration was formalized in 2014, when the **Severe Acute Respiratory Infections network for the Americas (SARInet)** was established. *SARInet*'s mission is to provide a forum for professionals from the Ministries of Health, reference laboratories, sentinel hospitals, and partner institutions to share experiences, collaborate, and define best practices to characterize and reduce the morbidity and mortality of influenza and ORV in the Americas. As of mid-2020, twenty countries in the Americas regularly report their surveillance data on SARI and Influenza-like-Illnesses (ILI) to PAHO/WHO within *SARInet*.

In parallel, countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have explored since 2012 ways to generate regional evidence on the effectiveness of Southern hemisphere influenza vaccines in preventing influenza-associated hospitalizations among persons targeted for vaccination. This work also seeks to inform immunization policy decisions regarding continued investments in influenza vaccination. Through the **network REVELAC-i** (Spanish acronym for **Network for the Evaluation of influenza Vaccine Effectiveness in Latin America and the Caribbean**), thirteen countries estimate each season influenza vaccine effectiveness among hospitalized young children and older adults. SARI surveillance provides an important input to these estimates.

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic presents challenges and opportunities for both networks. While it is imperative to sustain influenza and ORV surveillance, Pandemic Influenza Severity Assessment, and estimation of seasonal influenza vaccine effectiveness, it is also important to reflect how COVID-19 surveillance can be integrated into the ongoing SARI/ILI surveillance and how work under *REVELAC-i* can be leveraged to prepare for COVID-19 vaccination and to assess possible COVID-19 vaccine effectiveness. The purpose of bringing together the *SARInet* and *REVELAC-i* networks is precisely to favor such reflection and outline a joint vision for the next 6–18 months.



Objectives

- Define the state of the SARI/ILI surveillance in Latin America and the Caribbean, including of laboratory work-up
- Review the results of the influenza vaccination for the 2020 Southern hemisphere season and anticipate potential difficulties in estimating effectiveness
- Outline challenges and opportunities related to surveillance, laboratory and vaccination in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and in preparation for COVID-19 vaccination

Participants

- Professionals at the national level who are responsible for the national influenza and ORV surveillance, including COVID-19 surveillance
- Technical lead professionals of the National Influenza Centres (NIC) and/or the national reference laboratories for influenza and ORV, including COVID-19 diagnostic
- Professionals responsible for the National Immunization Program
- Representatives of SARInet and REVELAC-i partner institutions
- PAHO/WHO personnel involved in prevention & control of respiratory diseases and immunization

Program

Wednesday – 16 September 2020

Time	Activity	Responsible
Session I: Welcome		
10:00–10:10	Welcome & opening remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ciro Ugarte, Director, Health Emergencies Department, PAHO • Andrés de Francisco, Director, Family Health Promotion & Life Course Department, PAHO • Rafael Araos Bralic, Head, Epidemiology Department, Health Ministry, Chile (as a country representative of SARInet & REVELAC-i) • Ann Moen, Chief, Influenza Preparedness & Response WHO 	
10:10–10:15	Review of the agenda & use of virtual platform	Andrea Vicari, PAHO
Session II: SARI/ILI surveillance during COVID-19 pandemic		
10:15–10:30	Global perspective on maintaining influenza surveillance systems & incorporating COVID-19 surveillance	Ann Moen, WHO
10:30–10:45	Regional SARI/ILI & COVID-19 surveillance	Andrea Vicari, PAHO
10:45–11:00	State of the regional and national laboratory networks for respiratory infections	Juliana Leite & Jairo Méndez, PAHO



<i>Wednesday, 16 September (continued)</i>		
11:00–11:05	Presentation of landscape report “Influenza & ORV surveillance systems in the Americas, 2019”	Jorge Jara, PAHO
11:05–11:15	Break	
11:15–12:00	Country experiences (15’ each): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 & influenza/ORV surveillance integration • Adapting national lab networks 	Roberto Arroba, Costa Rica Martha von Horoch, Paraguay Elsa Baumeister, Argentina
12:00–12:30	Plenary discussion	

Thursday – 17 September 2020

Time	Activity	Responsible
10:00–10:10	Summary of session II	Angel Rodríguez, PAHO
Session III: Clinical management & infection prevention and control of respiratory diseases		
10:10–10:25	Guidance on clinical management of influenza infections	Angel Rodríguez, PAHO
10:25–10:45	Key issues in clinical management & IPC during COVID-19 pandemic	Joao Toledo, PAHO
10:45–11:15	Plenary discussion	
11:15–11:25	Break	
SESSION IV: Burden of disease & estimating at-risk population for severe COVID-19		
11:25–11:40	Advances in estimating burden of disease of influenza & COVID-19	Eduardo Azziz-Baumgartner, CDC
11:40–11:50	Tool for estimating burden of COVID-19 disease	Julia Fitzner, WHO
11:50–12:10	Opportunities in estimating burden of disease based on influenza & COVID-19 experiences	Paula Couto, PAHO Country round table (Chile, Honduras, Jamaica)
12:10–12:30	Plenary discussion	



Friday – 18 September 2020

Time	Activity	Responsible
10:00–10:10	Summary of sessions III & IV	Paula Couto, PAHO
Session V: Influenza & COVID-19 vaccination		
10:10–10:25	Influenza vaccination in the Americas in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic	Alba Maria Ropero, PAHO
10:25–10:55	Country experiences (15' each): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovative strategies to reach high-risk groups • Seasonal influenza vaccination in the context of a pandemic 	Francieli Fontana, Brazil Nathalia Katz, Argentina
10:55–11:10	Plenary discussion	
11:10–11:30	Leveraging <i>REVELAC-i</i> & <i>SARInet</i> platforms to estimate COVID-19 vaccine effectiveness	Nathalie El Omeiri, PAHO Country roundtable (Brazil, Chile, Paraguay)
11:30–11:40	Plenary discussion	
11:40–11:50	Break	
11:50–12:05	Progress on COVID-19 vaccines & country readiness and planning for COVID-19 vaccination	Alba Vilajeliu, PAHO
12:05–12:20	Tool for estimating at-risk population for severe COVID-19	Roberta Caxeita & Ana Rivière-Cinamond, PAHO
12:20–12:50	Plenary discussion	
Session VI: Closure		
12:50–1:00	Closing remarks	Alba Maria Ropero & Andrea Vicari, PAHO
1:00	Meeting closure	