COVID-19 TESTING SUMMARY

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNICABLE DISEASES
Division of the National Health Laboratory Service

SOUTH AFRICA | WEEK 3 2022

OVERVIEW OF REPORT

This report summarises national laboratory testing for SARS-CoV-2, the virus causing COVID-19, in South Africa. This report is based on data for specimens reported up to 22 January 2022 (Week 3 of 2022).

HIGHLIGHTS

- The number of tests reported in week 3 of 2022 (n=191,510: 147,872 PCR and 43,638 antigen tests) was slightly lower than the number of tests reported in the previous week.
- In week 3, the testing rate was highest in the Western Cape (459 per 100,000 persons) and lowest in Limpopo (100 per 100,000 persons).
- In week 3, the percentage testing positive was 11.7%, which was 4.0% lower than the previous week.
- In week 3, compared to the previous week, the percentage testing positive increased in Mpumalanga and Limpopo, was unchanged in the North West, and decreased in all other provinces.
- The percentage testing positive in week 3 was highest in Limpopo (24.4%) and was between 10-20% in the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, North West and Mpumalanga provinces. The percentage testing positive was <10% in Gauteng and the Free State.

Executive Summary:

- In the period 1 March 2020 through 22 January 2022, 21,843,211 tests for SARS-CoV-2 have been reported nationally: 18,345,405 PCR and 3,497,806 antigen tests.
- The number of tests reported in week 3 of 2021 (n=191,510: 147 872 PCR and 43,638 antigen tests) was slightly lower than the number of tests reported in the previous week.
- Gauteng reported the largest proportion of tests (37.1%), followed by KwaZulu-Natal (17.5%) and Western Cape (17.1%).
- The overall testing rate decreased slightly from 366 per 100,000 persons in week 2 to 318 per 100,000 persons in week 3.
- In week 3, the testing rate was similar to the previous week in the North West and Limpopo, and decreased in all other provinces. The testing rate was highest in the Western Cape (459 per 100,000 persons) and lowest in Limpopo (100 per 100,000 persons).
- The testing rate in week 3 was highest in the ≥80 years age group (755 per 100,000 persons).
- The percentage testing positive continued to decrease and in week 3 it was 11.7%, which was 4.0% lower than the previous week (P<0.001).
- In the past week, the percentage testing positive decreased by 4.1% in the public sector (16.1% in week 2 to 12.0% in week 3, P<0.001) and by 3.8% in the private sector (15.4% in week 2 to 11.6% in week 3, P<0.001).
- In week 3, compared to the previous week, the percentage testing positive increased in Mpumalanga and Limpopo, was unchanged in the North West, and decreased in all other provinces.
- The percentage testing positive in week 3 was highest in Limpopo (24.4%) and was between 10-20% in the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, North West and Mpumalanga provinces. The percentage testing positive was <10% in Gauteng and the Free State.
- The percentage testing positive was highest in the 10-14 years age group (26.1%).
- Health sub-districts showing the highest percentage testing positive were concentrated in the Western Cape (n=8), Limpopo (n=6), and Northern Cape (n=5).
- Antigen tests accounted for 22.8% (43,638/191,510) of tests reported in week 3, however the number of antigen tests is likely underestimated due to under-reporting and delayed reporting of antigen tests.
- In week 3 the public sector accounted for 67.1% (29,298/43,638) of antigen tests reported. A decrease in the number of antigen tests reported was observed across all provinces in the past few weeks.
- The mean turnaround time for PCR tests reported in week 3 was 0.9 days; 1.1 days in the public sector and 0.8 days in the private sector. Turnaround times for public sector PCR tests increased in Mpumalanga, Limpopo and the Northern Cape in the past week, and were >2 days in the Northern Cape and Mpumalanga provinces.
- The mean turnaround time for antigen tests reported in week 3 was 8.7 days in the public sector and 0.1 days in the private sector.

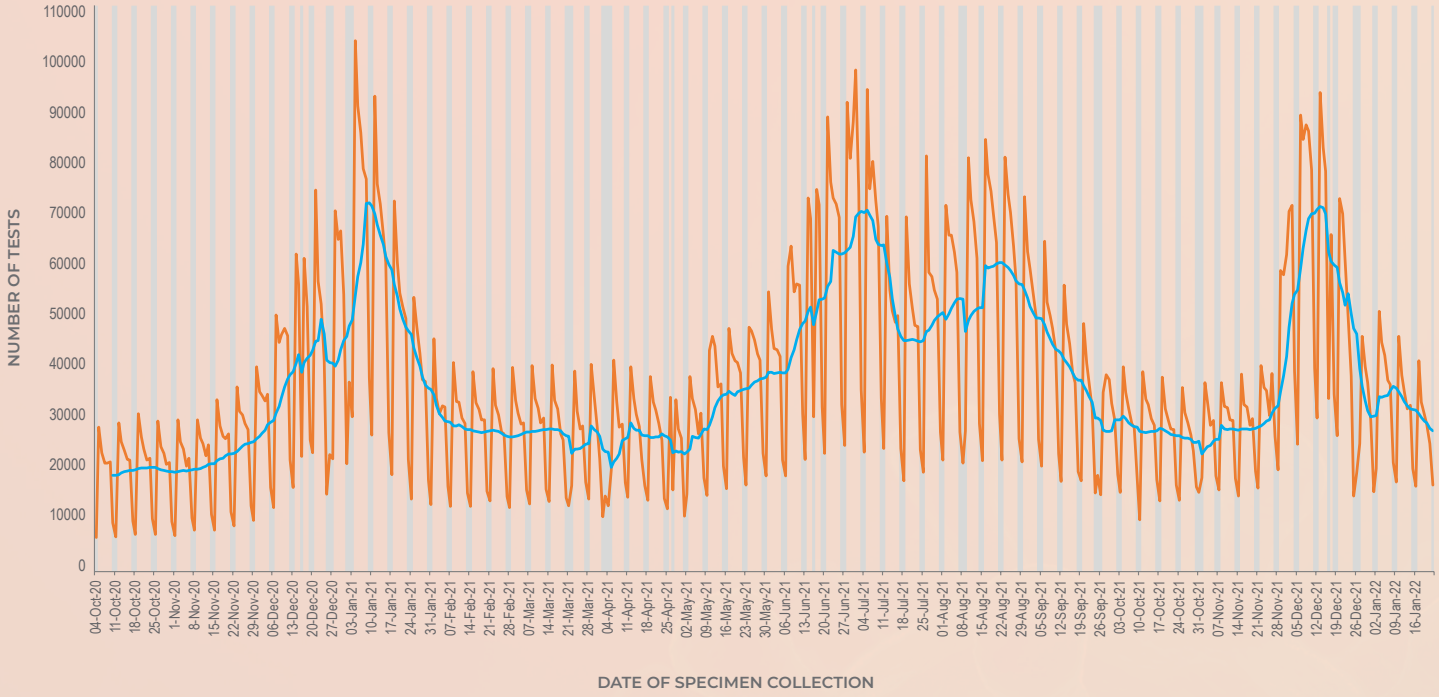

Figure 1. Number of SARS-CoV-2 tests reported by date of specimen collection, South Africa, 4 October 2020 – 22 January 2022. Blue line shows the 7-day moving average of the number of tests reported. Grey bars highlight weekend days and public holidays

Table 1. Weekly number of SARS-CoV-2 tests and positive tests reported, South Africa, 3 January 2021 – 22 January 2022

Week number	Week beginning	No. of tests n (%)	No. of positive tests	Percentage testing positive (%)
1	03-Jan-21	501378 (2.3)	151071	30.1
2	10-Jan-21	418298 (1.9)	104825	25.1
3	17-Jan-21	327528 (1.5)	63282	19.3
4	24-Jan-21	249613 (1.1)	34652	13.9
5	31-Jan-21	203787 (0.9)	22378	11.0
6	07-Feb-21	193334 (0.9)	16476	8.5
7	14-Feb-21	190698 (0.9)	12191	6.4
8	21-Feb-21	184715 (0.8)	10388	5.6
9	28-Feb-21	189723 (0.9)	8695	4.6
10	07-Mar-21	193451 (0.9)	8340	4.3
11	14-Mar-21	185524 (0.8)	8156	4.4
12	21-Mar-21	173271 (0.8)	7356	4.2
13	28-Mar-21	163973 (0.8)	7063	4.3
14	04-Apr-21	180873 (0.8)	7292	4.0
15	11-Apr-21	185348 (0.8)	8847	4.8
16	18-Apr-21	184918 (0.8)	9471	5.1
17	25-Apr-21	160022 (0.7)	9182	5.7
18	02-May-21	193966 (0.9)	13461	6.9
19	09-May-21	240288 (1.1)	19937	8.3
20	16-May-21	248487 (1.1)	24212	9.7
21	23-May-21	262631 (1.2)	29778	11.3
22	30-May-21	270299 (1.2)	36103	13.4
23	06-Jun-21	337900 (1.5)	59449	17.6
24	13-Jun-21	370979 (1.7)	88084	23.7
25	20-Jun-21	432401 (2.0)	118614	27.4
26	27-Jun-21	490224 (2.2)	146618	29.9
27	04-Jul-21	443819 (2.0)	141452	31.9
28	11-Jul-21	320596 (1.5)	100941	31.5
29	18-Jul-21	313022 (1.4)	88426	28.2
30	25-Jul-21	350379 (1.6)	88318	25.2
31	01-Aug-21	371191 (1.7)	88095	23.7
32	08-Aug-21	358827 (1.6)	83361	23.2
33	15-Aug-21	420720 (1.9)	95349	22.7
34	22-Aug-21	391290 (1.8)	78153	20.0
35	29-Aug-21	345057 (1.6)	55053	16.0
36	05-Sep-21	300189 (1.4)	38822	12.9
37	12-Sep-21	260525 (1.2)	24008	9.2
38	19-Sep-21	208872 (1.0)	14005	6.7
39	26-Sep-21	206533 (0.9)	9484	4.6
40	03-Oct-21	196371 (0.9)	6444	3.3
41	10-Oct-21	191355 (0.9)	5019	2.6
42	17-Oct-21	184968 (0.8)	3408	1.8
43	24-Oct-21	175923 (0.8)	2561	1.5
44	31-Oct-21	180088 (0.8)	2095	1.2
45	07-Nov-21	193727 (0.9)	2312	1.2
46	14-Nov-21	195320 (0.9)	4801	2.5
47	21-Nov-21	222431 (1.0)	18929	8.5
48	28-Nov-21	377781 (1.7)	98066	26.0
49	05-Dec-21	487609 (2.2)	174286	35.7
50	12-Dec-21	416873 (1.9)	153625	36.9
51	19-Dec-21	331045 (1.5)	116534	35.2
52	20-Dec-21	211613 (1.0)	65310	30.9
1	02-Jan-22	252343 (1.2)	60398	23.9
2	09-Jan-22	220589 (1.0)	34572	15.7
3	16-Jan-22	191510 (0.9)	22473	11.7
	Total	**21,843,211 (100.0)**	**3,887,155**	

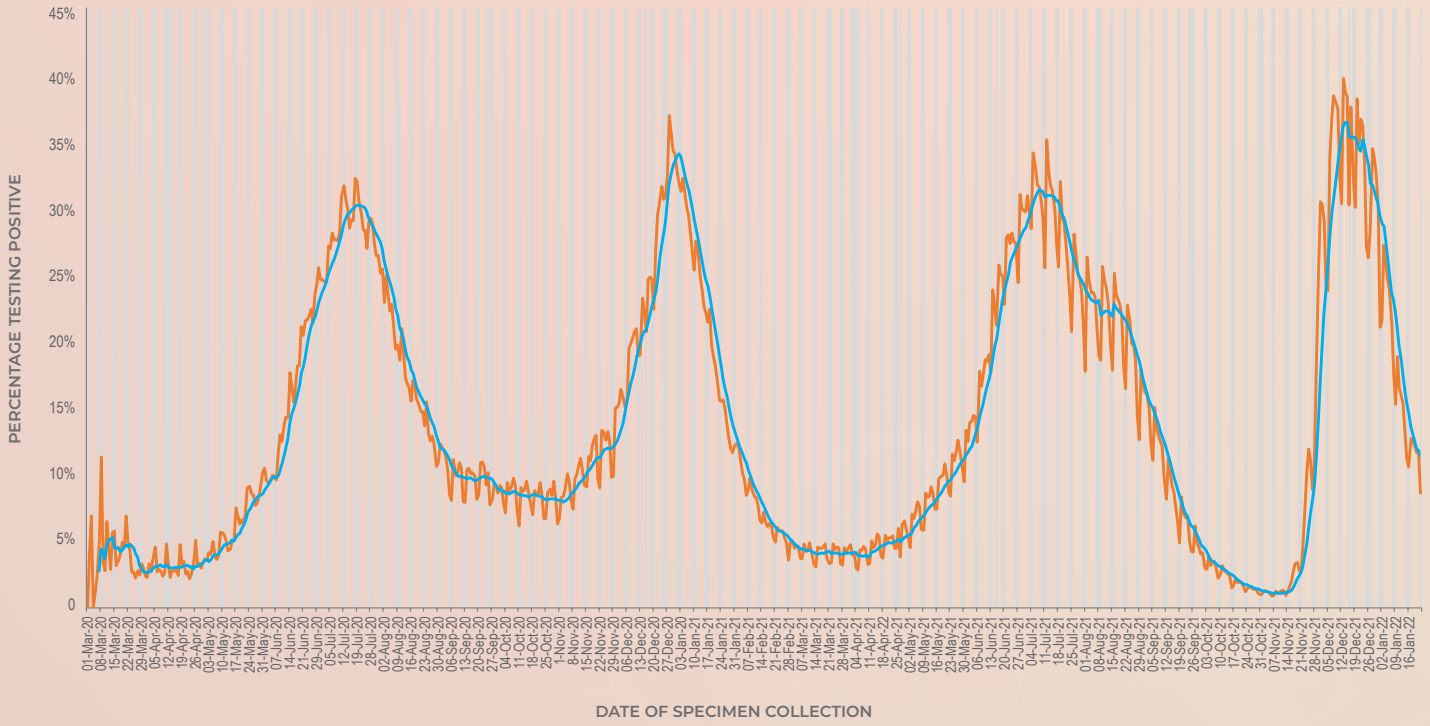

Figure 2. Percentage of tests positive for SARS-CoV-2 by date of specimen collection, South Africa, 1 March 2020 - 22 January 2022. Blue line shows the 7-day moving average of the percentage testing positive. Grey bars highlight weekend days and public holidays.

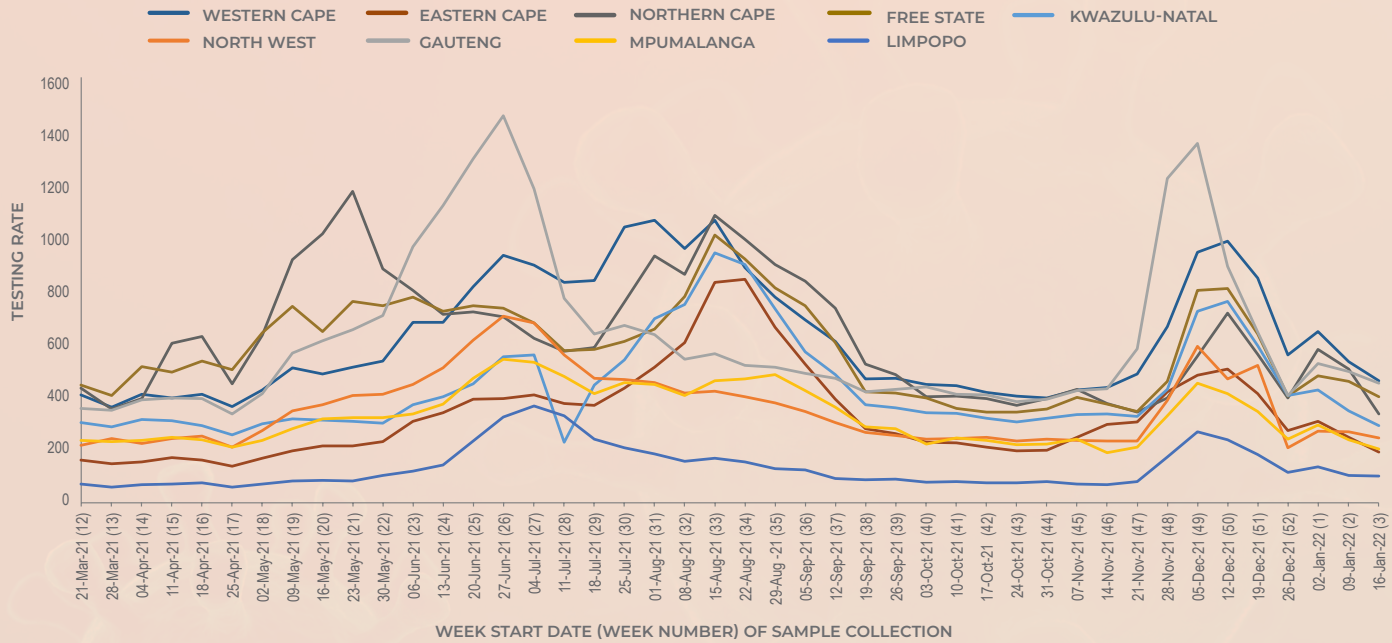

Figure 3. Testing rate per 100,000 persons by province and week of specimen collection, South Africa, 21 March 2021 – 22 January 2022

Table 2. Weekly number of tests and positive tests reported by province, South Africa, 2-22 January 2022

		2-8 Jan 2022		9-15 Jan 2022		16-22 Jan 2022			
Province	**Population[a]**	**No. of tests**	**No. positive tests (%)**	**No. of tests**	**No. positive tests (%)**	**No. of tests**	**No. positive tests (%)**	**Tests per 100,000 persons**	**Change in percentage positive[b]**
Western Cape	7113776	45746	15525 (33.9)	37689	8681 (23.0)	32686	4841 (14.8)	459	-8.2%
Eastern Cape	6676590	20478	6009 (29.3)	16460	2996 (18.2)	12765	1393 (10.9)	191	-7.3%
Northern Cape	1303047	7514	2522 (33.6)	6564	1504 (22.9)	4355	800 (18.4)	334	-4.5%
Free State	2932441	13983	2874 (20.6)	13416	1616 (12.0)	11685	1088 (9.3)	398	-2.7%
KwaZulu-Natal	11513575	48847	13406 (27.4)	39825	6728 (16.9)	33426	3723 (11.1)	290	-5.8%
North West	4122854	11077	2343 (21.2)	11018	1544 (14.0)	10040	1454 (14.5)	244	0.5%
Gauteng	15810388	82848	13310 (16.1)	78210	8612 (11.0)	70958	6162 (8.7)	449	-2.3%
Mpumalanga	4743584	13867	2403 (17.3)	11214	1667 (14.9)	9638	1563 (16.2)	203	1.4%
Limpopo	5926724	7957	2002 (25.2)	6162	1222 (19.8)	5927	1447 (24.4)	100	4.6%
Unknown		26	4 (15.4)	31	2 (6.5)	30	2 (6.7)		
Total	**60142978**	**252343**	**60398 (23.9)**	**220589**	**34572 (15.7)**	**191510**	**22473 (11.7)**	**318**	**-4.0%**

a 2021 Mid-year population Statistics SA

b Current week compared to previous week

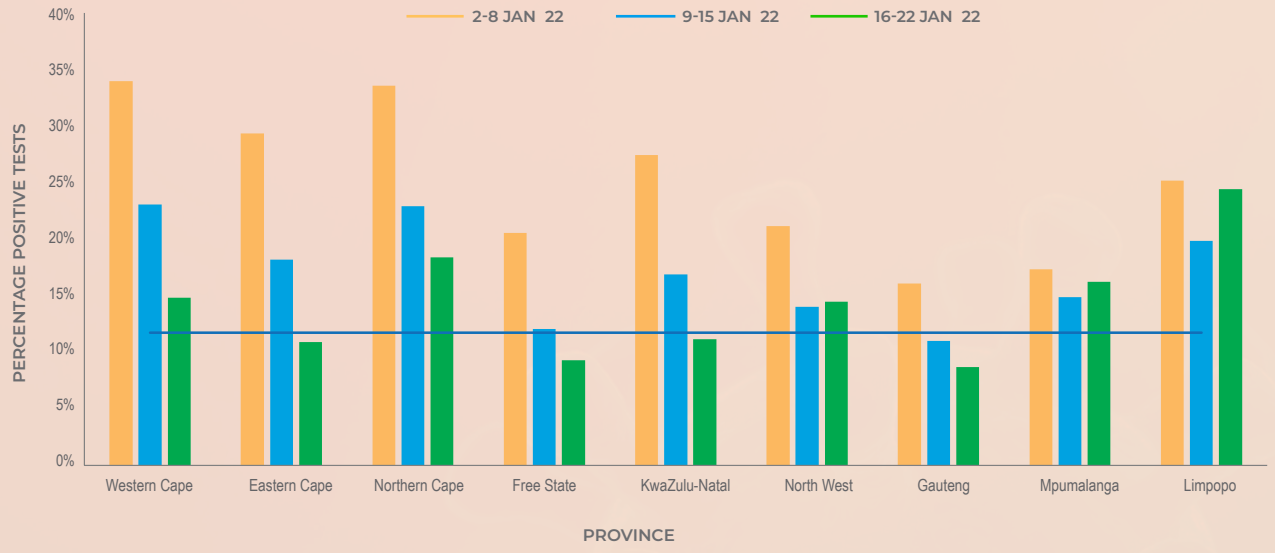

Figure 4. Weekly percentage testing positive by province, South Africa, 2-22 January 2022. The horizontal blue line shows the national mean for week 3, beginning 16 January 2022

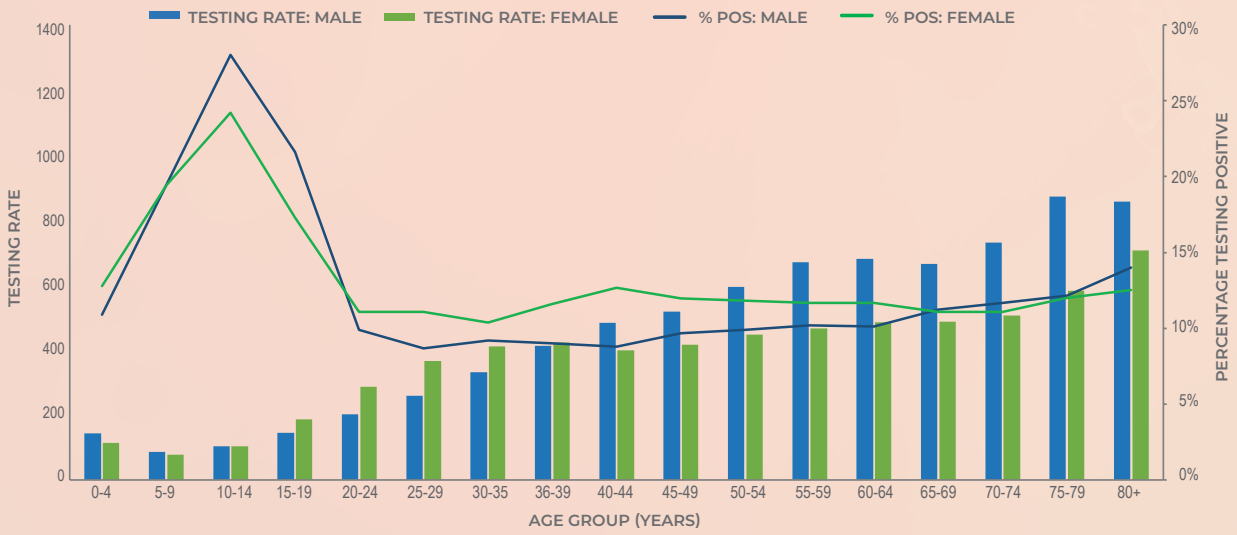

Figure 5. Testing rates per 100,000 persons and percentage testing positive by age group and sex, South Africa, week 3, 16-22 January 2022

Table 3. Health sub-districts with the highest proportion testing positive based on public and private sector data for the week of 16-22 January 2022

Health district or sub-district	Province	PTP (95% CI)	Previous week
Cederberg	Western Cape	0.538 (0.394-0.682)	0.597 (0.479-0.715)
Hantam	Northern Cape	0.523 (0.431-0.616)	0.681 (0.622-0.740)
Cape Agulhas	Western Cape	0.484 (0.369-0.600)	0.582 (0.504-0.660)
Matzikama	Western Cape	0.408 (0.341-0.476)	0.499 (0.448-0.551)
Karoo Hoogland	Northern Cape	0.387 (0.269-0.504)	0.478 (0.378-0.579)
Umzumbe	KwaZulu-Natal	0.384 (0.281-0.486)	0.301 (0.237-0.365)
Makhado	Limpopo	0.382 (0.332-0.431)	0.325 (0.274-0.375)
Witzenberg	Western Cape	0.373 (0.292-0.455)	0.432 (0.364-0.499)
Thulamela	Limpopo	0.367 (0.322-0.412)	0.378 (0.329-0.427)
Swartland	Western Cape	0.353 (0.263-0.442)	0.460 (0.384-0.536)
Nqutu	KwaZulu-Natal	0.342 (0.285-0.399)	0.370 (0.313-0.426)
Kamiesberg	Northern Cape	0.341 (0.253-0.429)	0.434 (0.352-0.516)
Swellendam	Western Cape	0.332 (0.237-0.427)	0.510 (0.426-0.593)
Langeberg	Western Cape	0.324 (0.230-0.417)	0.407 (0.320-0.493)
Modimolle	Limpopo	0.318 (0.239-0.398)	0.120 (0.071-0.169)
Ga-Segonyana	Northern Cape	0.305 (0.222-0.388)	0.307 (0.245-0.369)
Greater Tzaneen	Limpopo	0.298 (0.262-0.333)	0.249 (0.215-0.282)
Saldanha Bay	Western Cape	0.294 (0.256-0.331)	0.360 (0.326-0.393)
Tswelopele	Free State	0.288 (0.211-0.366)	0.175 (0.124-0.226)
Emthanjeni	Northern Cape	0.279 (0.163-0.394)	0.293 (0.188-0.398)
Umzimkhulu	KwaZulu-Natal	0.270 (0.164-0.376)	0.202 (0.137-0.267)
Randfontein	Gauteng	0.269 (0.237-0.301)	0.431 (0.397-0.464)
Greater Giyani	Limpopo	0.263 (0.140-0.386)	0.293 (0.185-0.402)
Bushbuckridge	Mpumalanga	0.255 (0.213-0.298)	0.260 (0.224-0.297)
Mogalakwena	Limpopo	0.250 (0.202-0.299)	0.209 (0.159-0.259)

95% CI: 95% confidence interval; PTP: adjusted positive test proportion; Elements marked in red have current week proportions testing positive that are higher than, and CIs that do not overlap with, the previous week proportions and CIs. Elements marked in blue have current week proportions testing positive that are lower than, and CIs that do not overlap with, the previous week proportions and CIs.

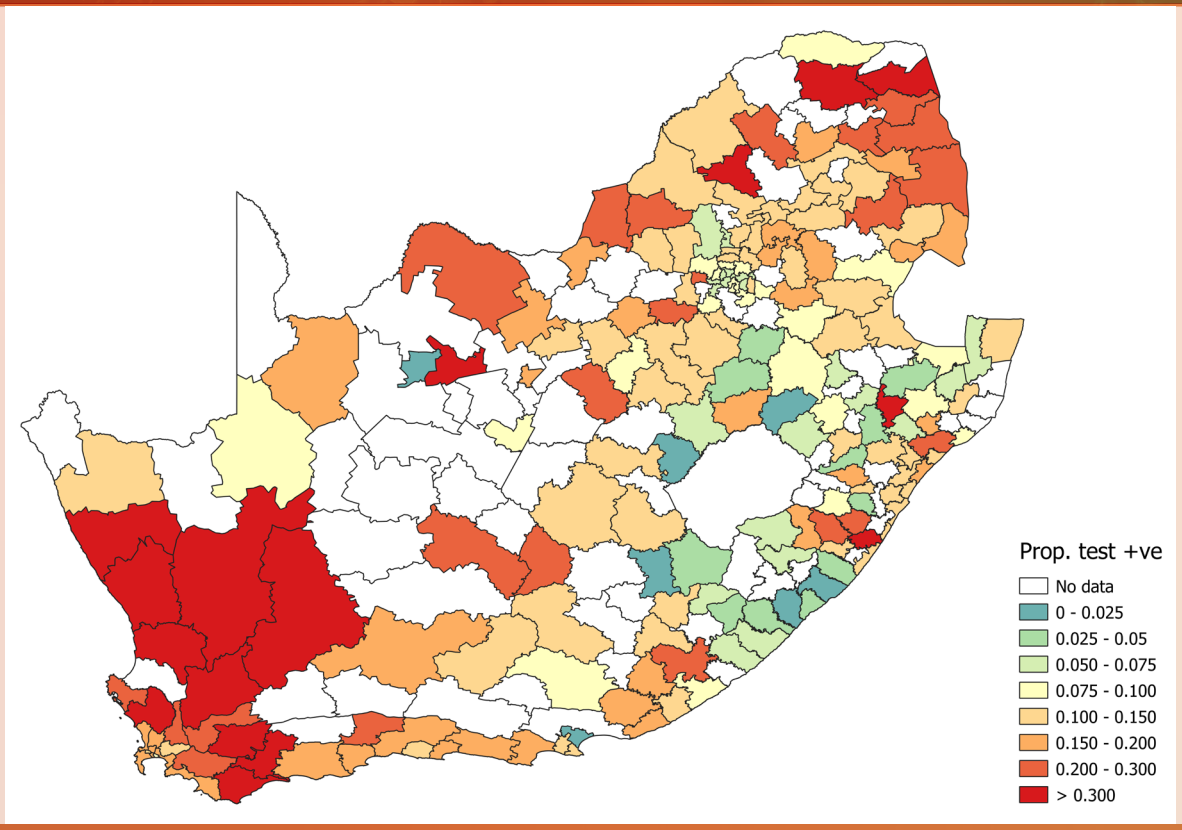

Figure 6. Proportion testing positive by health sub-district in South Africa for the week of 16-22 January 2022. Areas shaded white represent districts in which either (i) no tests were reported (ii) all tests were negative or (iii) the confidence interval exceeded 30%.

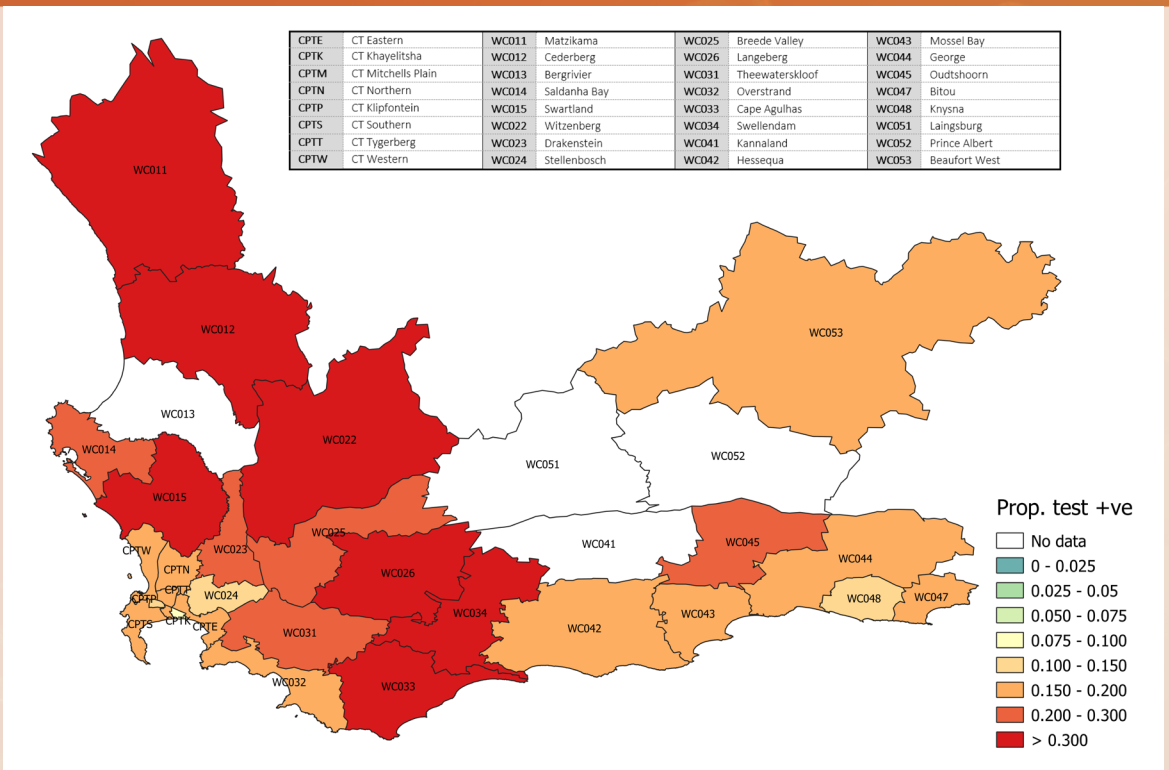

Figure 7. Proportion testing positive by health sub-district in the Western Cape Province for the week of 16-22 January 2022. Areas shaded white represent districts in which either (i) no tests were reported (ii) all tests were negative or (iii) the confidence interval exceeded 30%

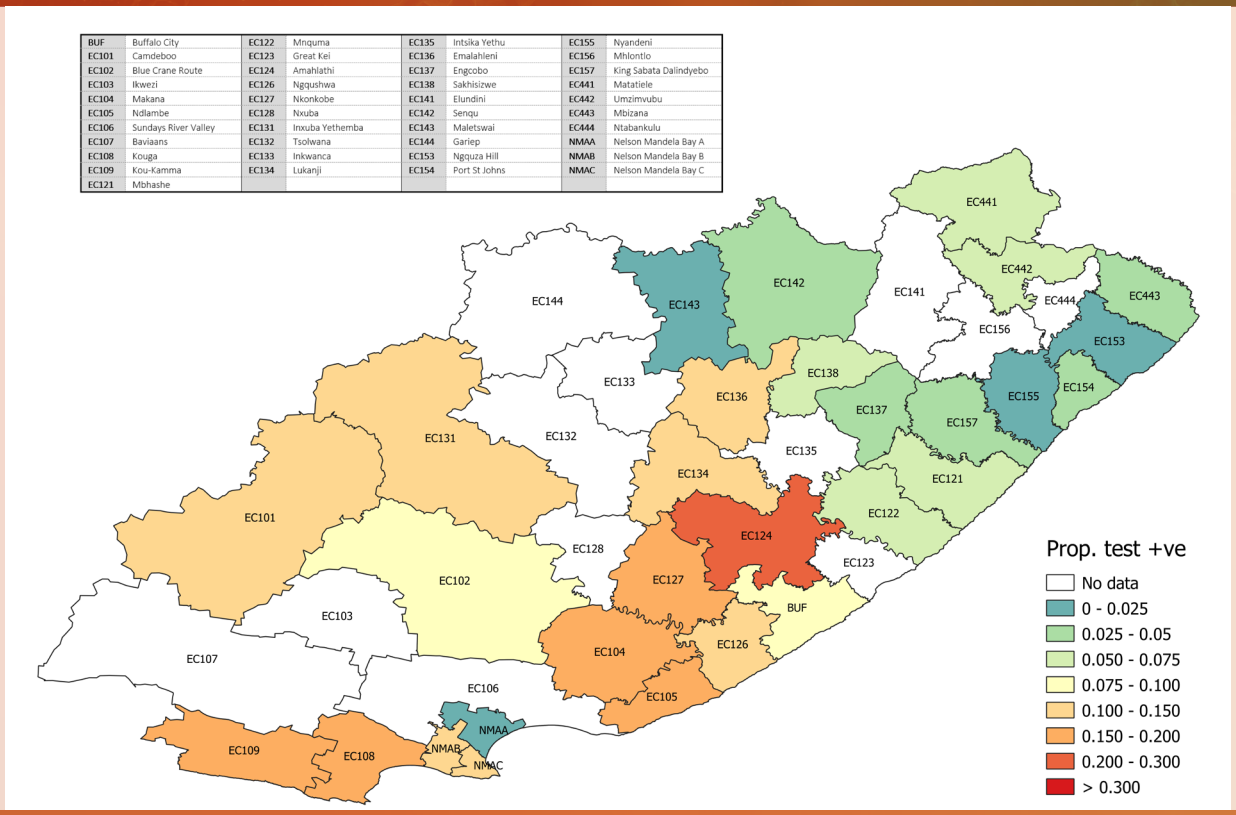

Figure 8. Proportion testing positive by health sub-district in the Eastern Cape Province for the week of 16-22 January 2022. Areas shaded white represent districts in which either (i) no tests were reported (ii) all tests were negative or (iii) the confidence interval exceeded 30%.

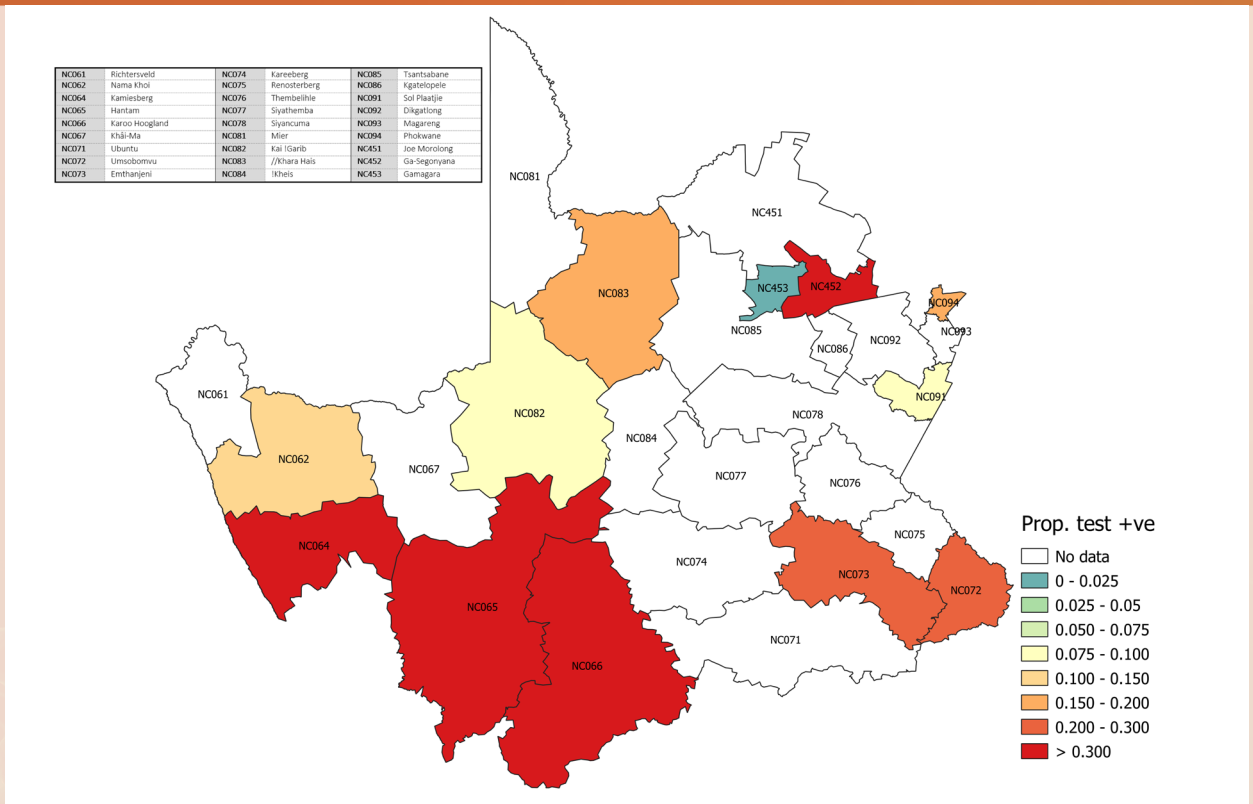

Figure 9. Proportion testing positive by health sub-district in Northern Cape Province for the week of 16-22 January 2022. Areas shaded white represent districts in which either (i) no tests were reported (ii) all tests were negative or (iii) the confidence interval exceeded 30%.

MAN	Mangaung	FS181	Masilonyana	FS191	Setsoto	FS196	Mantsopa
FS161	Letsemeng	FS182	Tokologo	FS192	Dihlabeng	FS201	Moqhaka
FS162	Kopanong	FS183	Tswelopele	FS193	Nketoana	FS203	Ngwathe
FS163	Mohokare	FS184	Matjhabeng	FS194	Maluti a Phofung	FS204	Metsimaholo
FS164	Naledi	FS185	Nala	FS195	Phumelela	FS205	Mafube

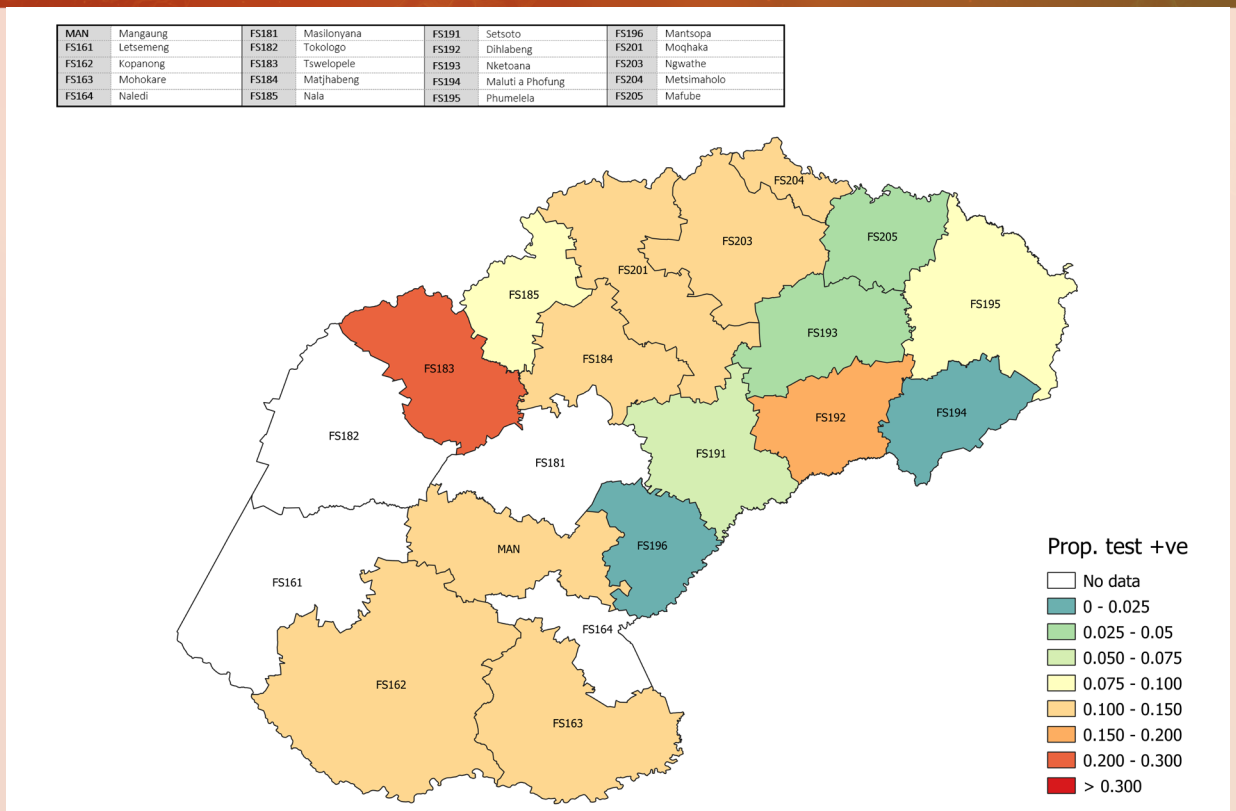

Figure 10. Proportion testing positive by health sub-district in Free State Province for the week of 16-22 January 2022. Areas shaded white represent districts in which either (i) no tests were reported (ii) all tests were negative or (iii) the confidence interval exceeded 30%.

ETHN	eThekwini North	KZN233	Indaka	KZN273	The Big 5 False Bay
ETHS	eThekwini South	KZN234	Umtshezi	KZN274	Hlabisa
ETHS	eThekwini South	KZN235	Okhahlamba	KZN275	Mtubatuba
ETHW	eThekwini West	KZN236	Imbabazane	KZN281	Mfolozi
KZN211	Vulamehlo	KZN241	Endumeni	KZN282	uMhlathuze
KZN212	Umdoni	KZN242	Nqutu	KZN283	Ntambanana
KZN213	Umzumbe	KZN244	Msinga	KZN284	uMlalazi
KZN214	uMuziwabantu	KZN245	Umvoti	KZN285	Mthonjaneni
KZN215	Ezingoleni	KZN252	Newcastle	KZN286	Nkandla
KZN216	Hibiscus Coast	KZN253	Emadlangeni	KZN291	Mandeni
KZN221	uMshwathi	KZN254	Dannhauser	KZN292	KwaDukuza
KZN222	uMngeni	KZN261	eDumbe	KZN293	Ndwedwe
KZN223	Mpofana	KZN262	uPhongolo	KZN294	Maphumulo
KZN224	Impendle	KZN263	Abaqulusi	KZN431	Ingwe
KZN225	The Msunduzi	KZN265	Nongoma	KZN432	Kwa Sani
KZN226	Mkhambathini	KZN266	Ulundi	KZN433	Greater Kokstad
KZN227	Richmond	KZN271	Umhlabuyalingana	KZN434	Ubuhlebezwe
KZN232	Emnambithi/Ladysmith	KZN272	Jozini	KZN435	Umzimkhulu

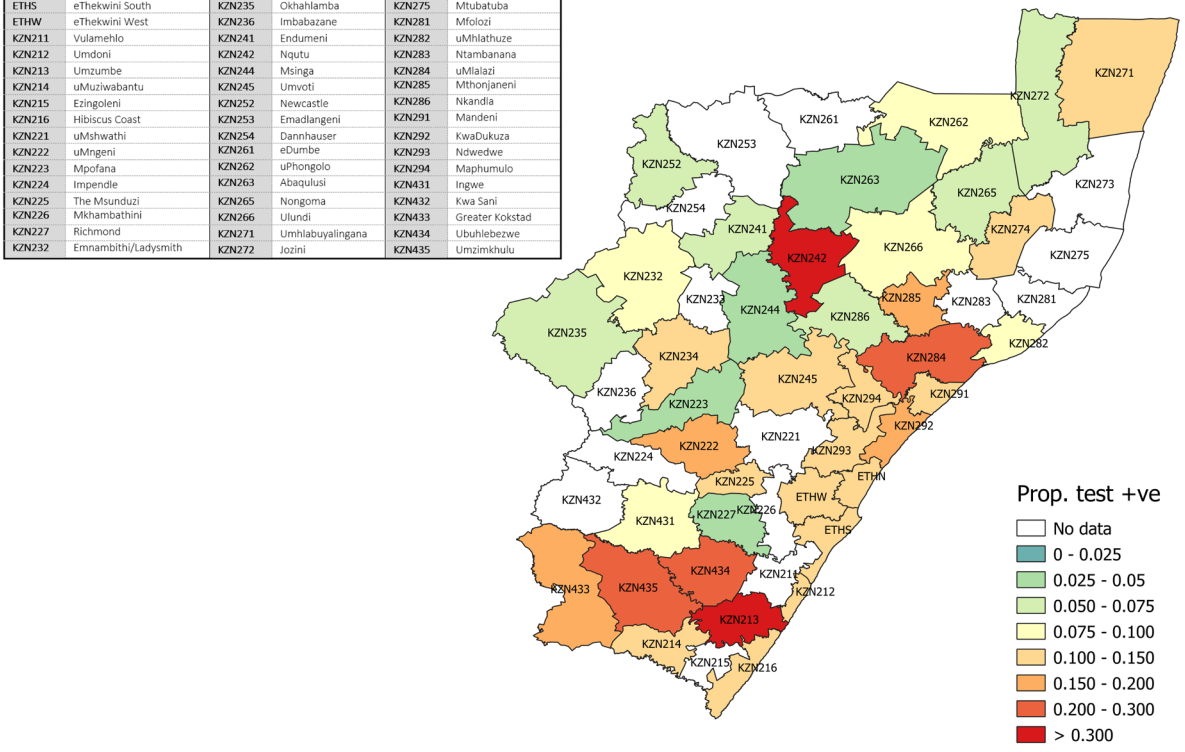

Figure 11. Proportion testing positive by health sub-district in KwaZulu-Natal Province for the week of 16-22 January 2022. Areas shaded white represent districts in which either (i) no tests were reported (ii) all tests were negative or (iii) the confidence interval exceeded 30%.

NW371	Moretele	NW383	Mafikeng	NW396	Lekwa-Teemane
NW372	Madibeng	NW384	Ditsobotla	NW397	Kagisano/Molopo
NW373	Rustenburg	NW385	Ramotshere Moiloa	NW401	Ventersdorp
NW374	Kgetlengrivier	NW392	Naledi	NW402	Tlokwe City Council
NW375	Moses Kotane	NW393	Mamusa	NW403	City of Matlosana
NW381	Ratlou	NW394	Greater Taung	NW404	Maquassi Hills
NW382	Tswaing				

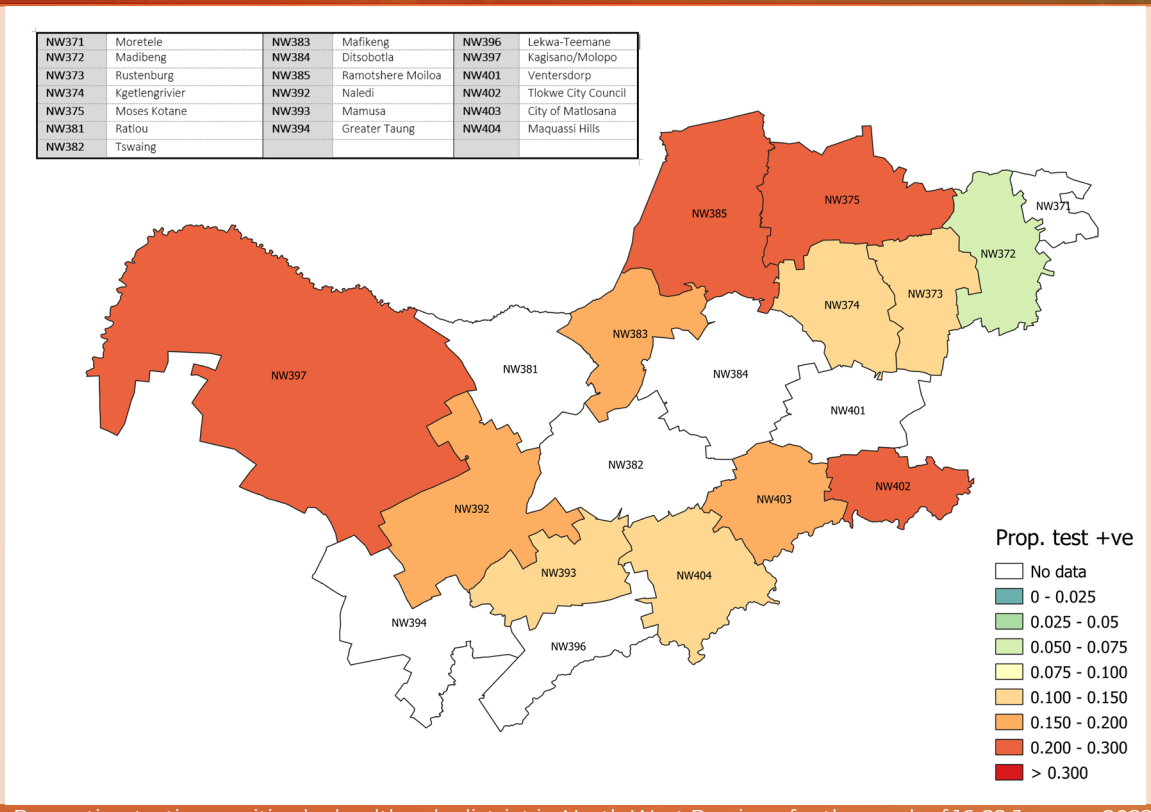

Figure 12. Proportion testing positive by health sub-district in North West Province for the week of 16-22 January 2022. Areas shaded white represent districts in which either (i) no tests were reported (ii) all tests were negative or (iii) the confidence interval exceeded 30%.

EKUE1	Ekurhuleni East 1	GT421	Emfuleni	JHBA	Johannesburg A	TSH1	Tshwane 1
EKUE2	Ekurhuleni East 2	GT422	Midvaal	JHBB	Johannesburg B	TSH2	Tshwane 2
EKUN1	Ekurhuleni North 1	GT423	Lesedi	JHBC	Johannesburg C	TSH3	Tshwane 3
EKUN2	Ekurhuleni North 2	GT481	Mogale City	JHBD	Johannesburg D	TSH4	Tshwane 4
EKUS1	Ekurhuleni South 1	GT482	Randfontein	JHBE	Johannesburg E	TSH5	Tshwane 5
EKUS2	Ekurhuleni South 2	GT483	Westonaria	JHBF	Johannesburg F	TSH6	Tshwane 6
		GT484	Merafong City	JHBG	Johannesburg G	TSH7	Tshwane 7

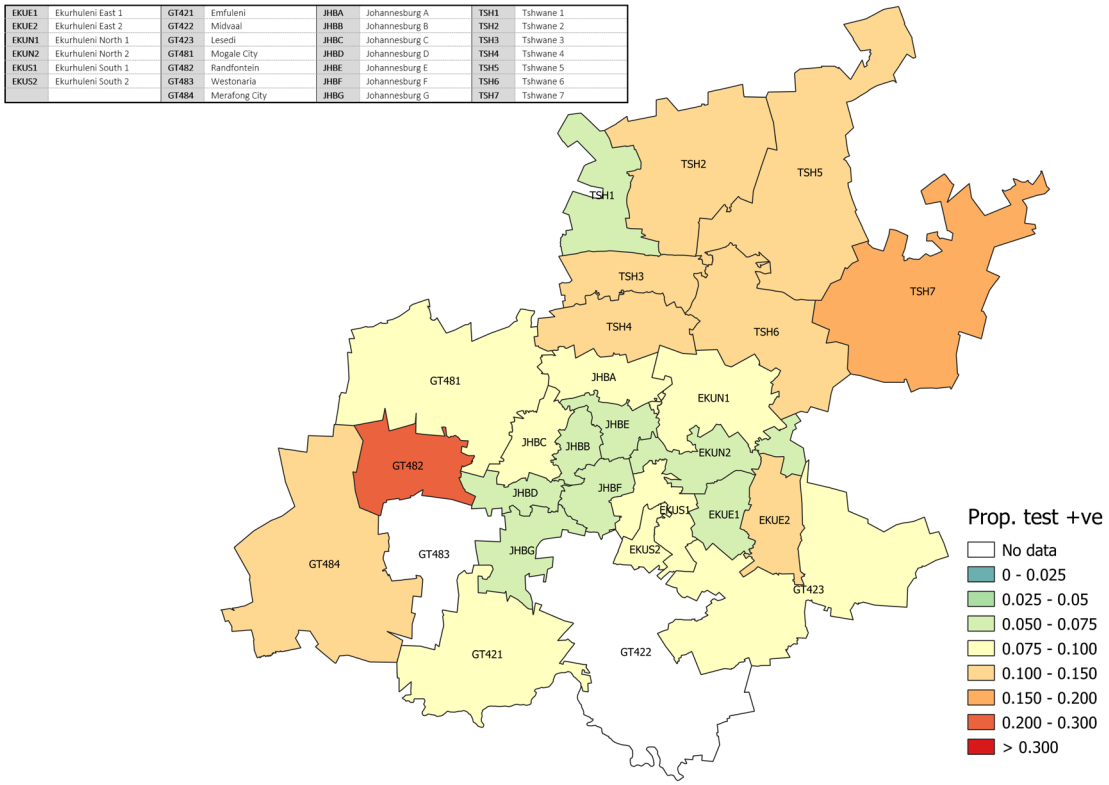

Figure 13. Proportion testing positive by health sub-district in Gauteng Province for the week of 16-22 January 2022. Areas shaded white represent districts in which either (i) no tests were reported (ii) all tests were negative or (iii) the confidence interval exceeded 30%.

MP301	Albert Luthuli	MP307	Govan Mbeki	MP316	Dr JS Moroka
MP302	Msukaligwa	MP311	Victor Khanye	MP321	Thaba Chweu
MP303	Mkhondo	MP312	Emalahleni	MP322	Mbombela
MP304	Pixley Ka Seme	MP313	Steve Tshwete	MP323	Umjindi
MP305	Lekwa	MP314	Emakhazeni	MP324	Nkomazi
MP306	Dipaleseng	MP315	Thembisile	MP325	Bushbuckridge

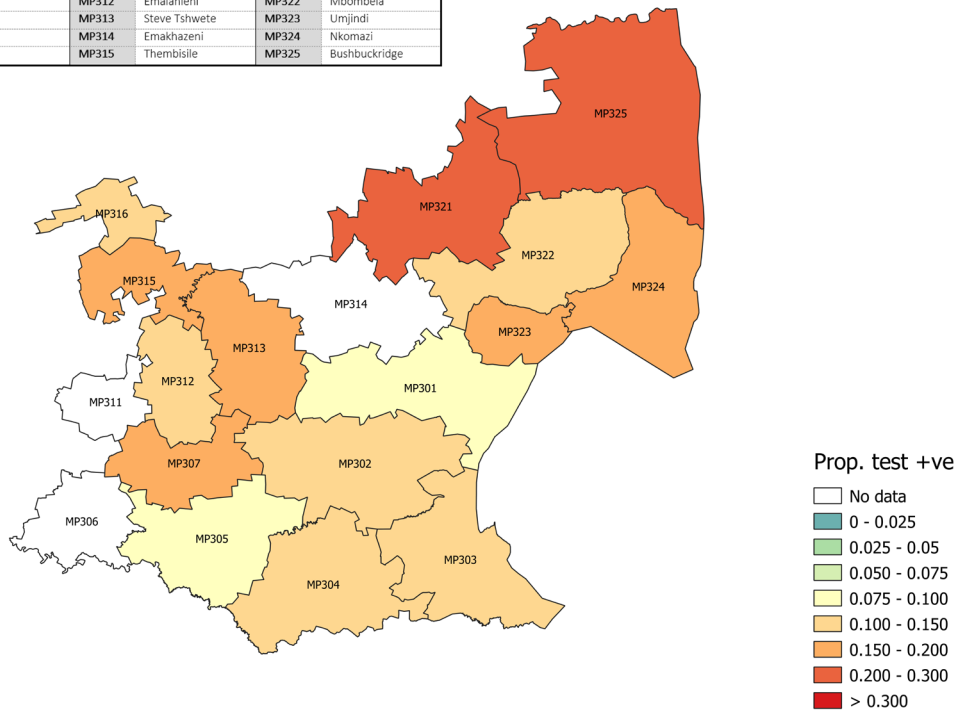

Figure 14. Proportion testing positive by health sub-district in Mpumalanga Province for the week of 16-22 January 2022. Areas shaded white represent districts in which either (i) no tests were reported (ii) all tests were negative or (iii) the confidence interval exceeded 30%.

LIM331	Greater Giyani	LIM351	Blouberg	LIM365	Modimolle
LIM332	Greater Letaba	LIM352	Aganang	LIM366	Bela-Bela
LIM333	Greater Tzaneen	LIM353	Molemole	LIM367	Mogalakwena
LIM334	Ba-Phalaborwa	LIM354	Polokwane	LIM471	Ephraim Mogale
LIM335	Maruleng	LIM355	Lepele-Nkumpi	LIM472	Elias Motsoaledi
LIM341	Musina	LIM361	Thabazimbi	LIM473	Makhuduthamaga
LIM342	Mutale	LIM362	Lephalale	LIM474	Fetakgomo
LIM343	Thulamela	LIM364	Mookgopong	LIM475	Greater Tubatse
LIM344	Makhado				

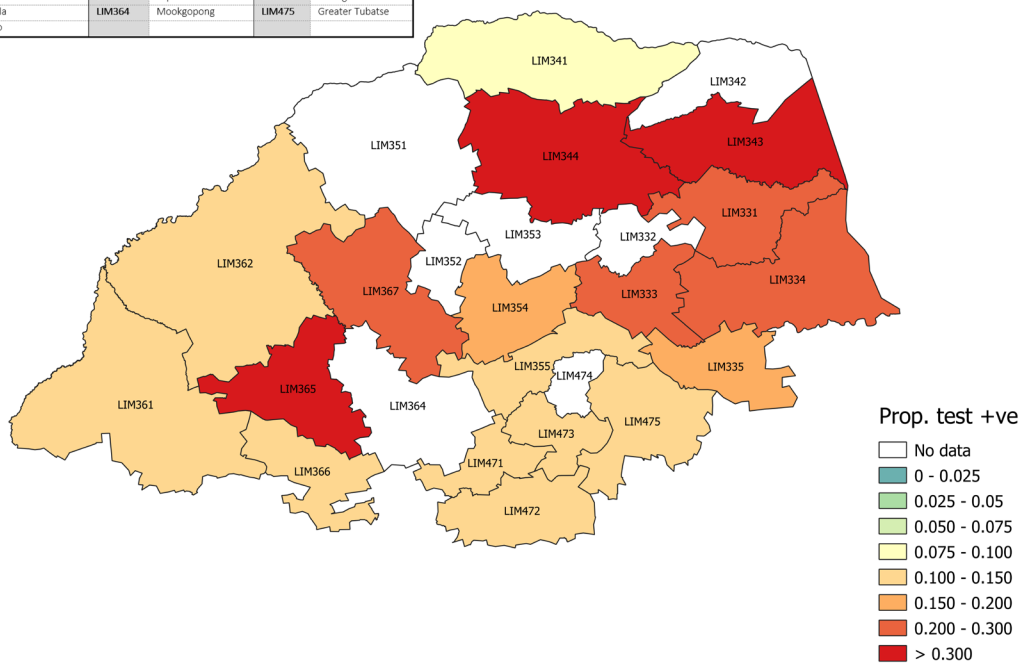

Figure 15. Proportion testing positive by health sub-district in Limpopo Province for the week of 16-22 January 2022. Areas shaded white represent districts in which either (i) no tests were reported (ii) all tests were negative or (iii) the confidence interval exceeded 30%.

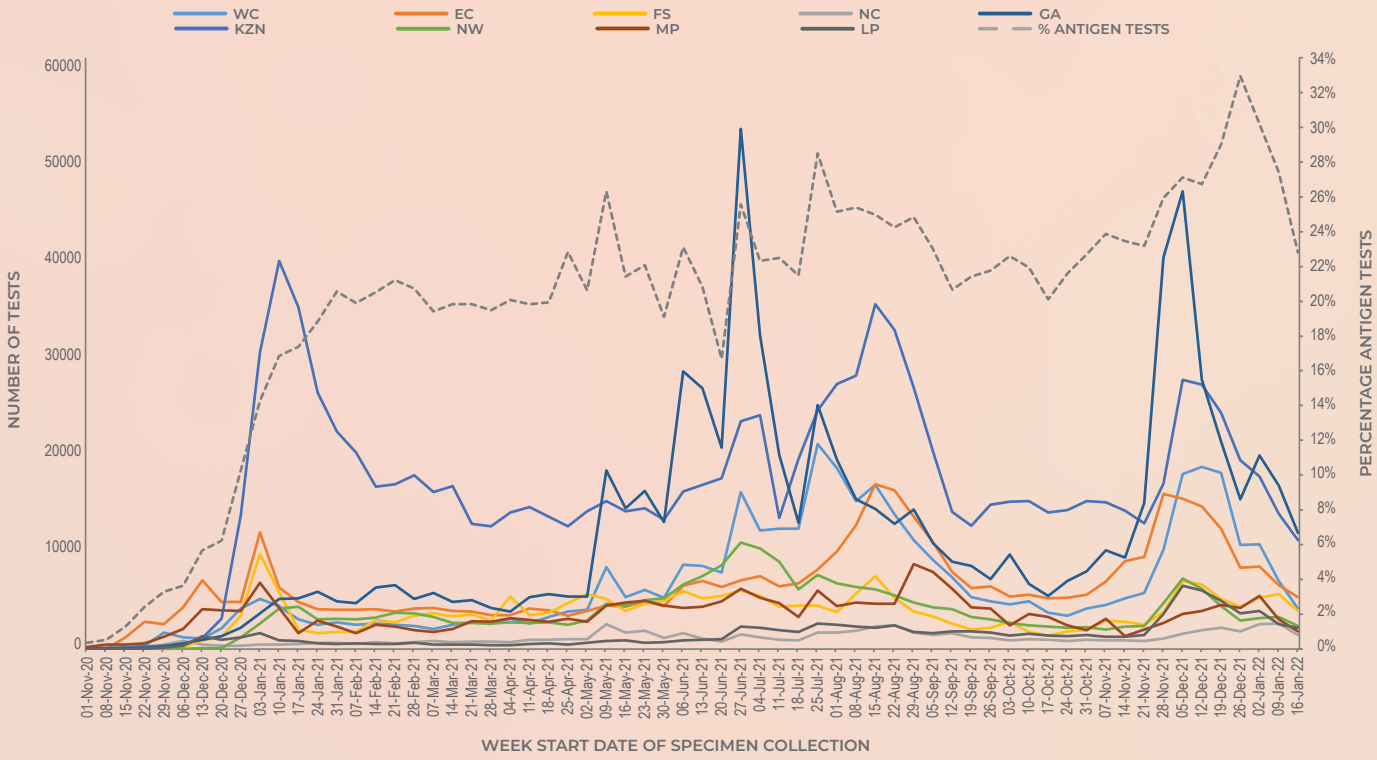

Figure 16. Number of antigen tests by province and overall percentage antigen tests, South Africa, 1 November 2020 – 22 January 2022. WC Western Cape; EC Eastern Cape; FS Free State; KZN KwaZulu-Natal; GA Gauteng; NC Northern Cape; NW North West; MP Mpumalanga; LP Limpopo

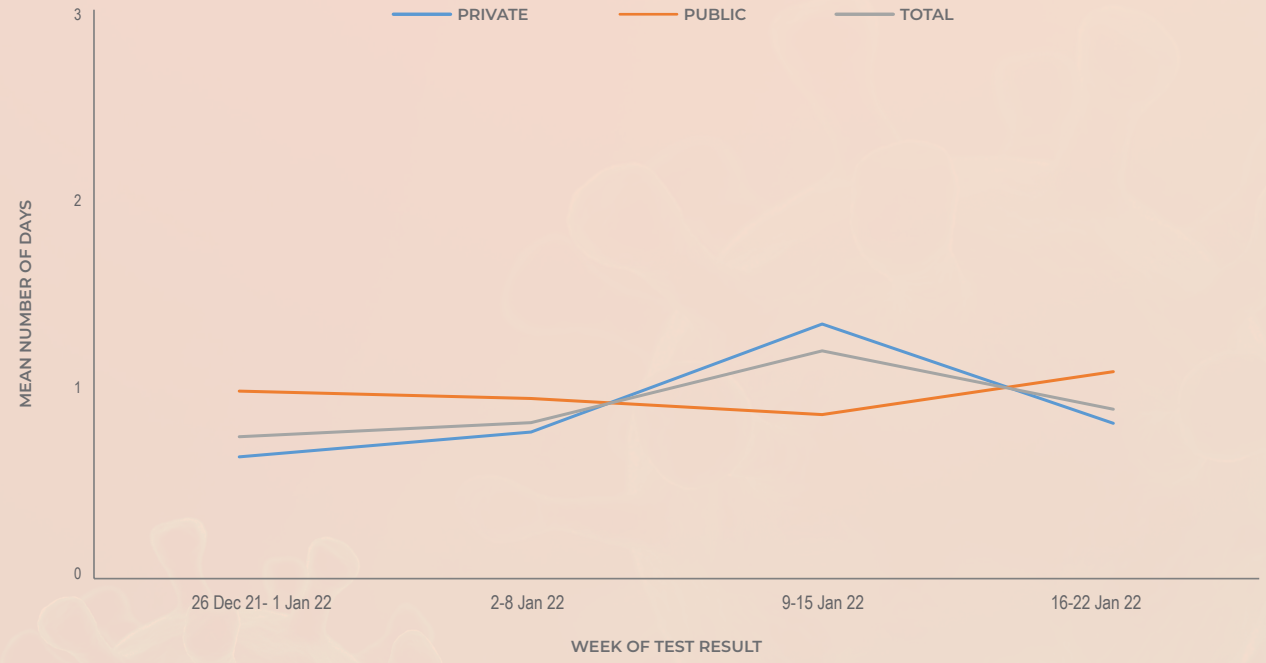

Figure 17. Mean number of days between date of specimen collection and date of test result for PCR tests by week of test result, South Africa, 26 December 2021 – 22 January 2022.

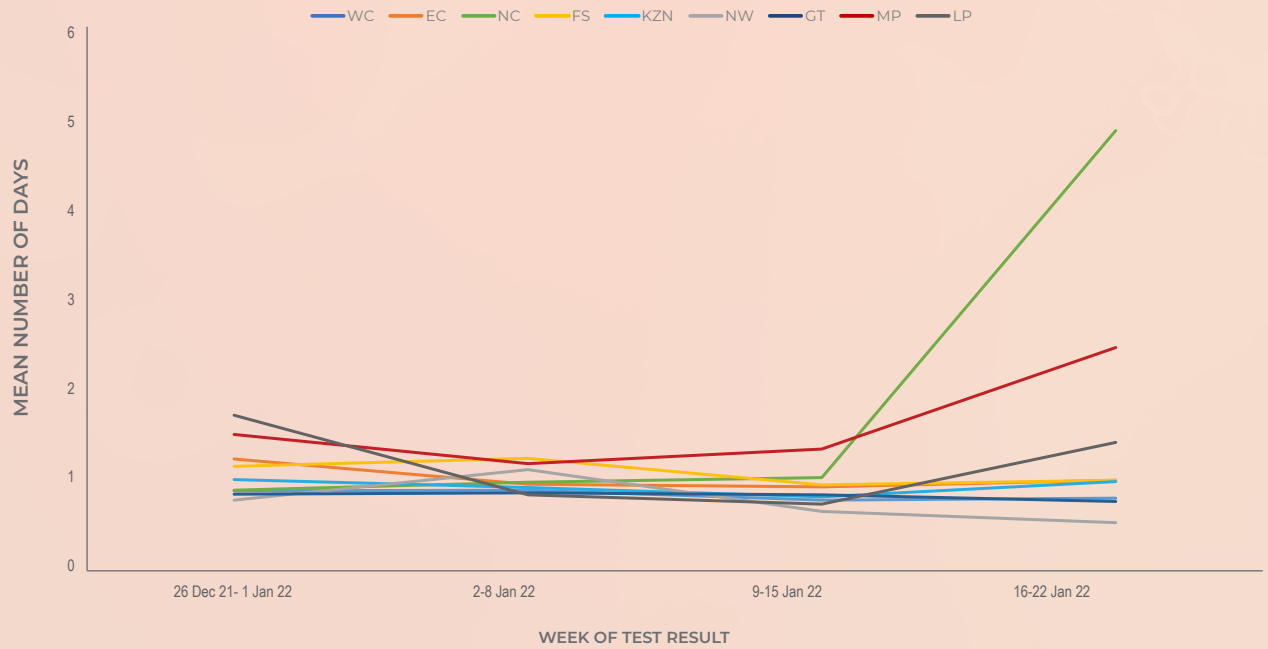

Figure 18. Mean number of days between date of specimen collection and date of test result for PCR tests in the public sector by week of test result and province, South Africa, 26 December 2021 – 22 January 2022. WC Western Cape; EC Eastern Cape; FS Free State; KZN KwaZulu-Natal; GT Gauteng; NC Northern Cape; NW North West; MP Mpumalanga; LP Limpopo

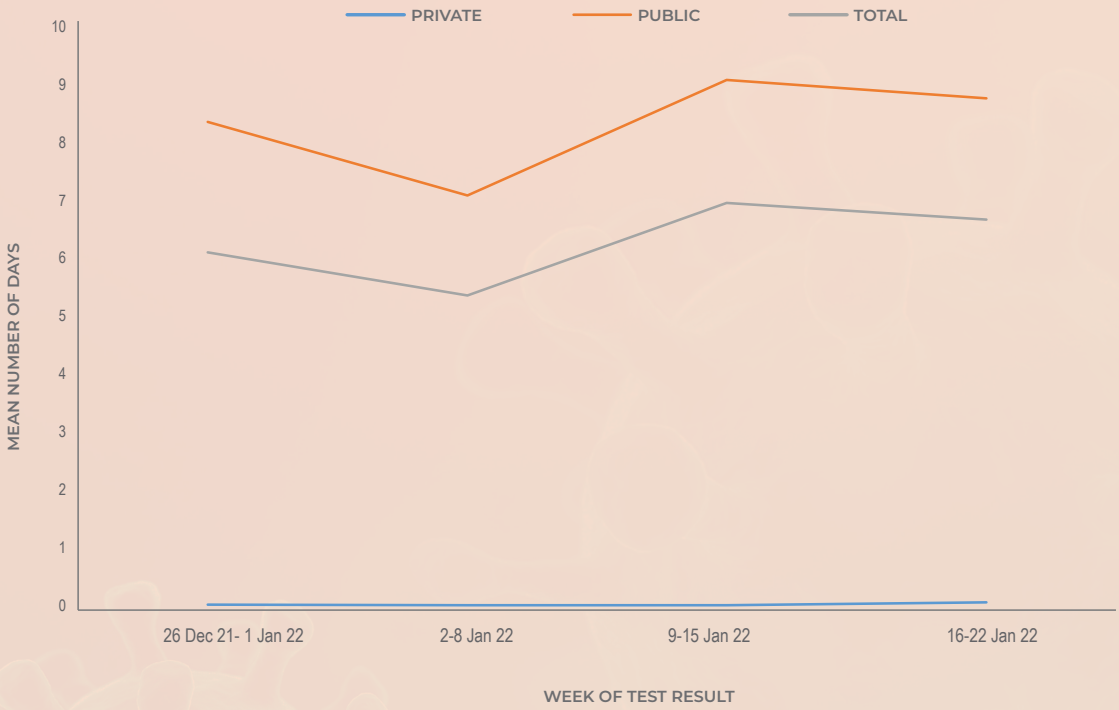

Figure 19. Mean number of days between date of specimen collection and date of test result for antigen tests by week of test result, South Africa, 26 December 2021 – 22 January 2022.

* Excludes one lab in the private sector for week 1 (2-8 Jan 2022)

Methods

Testing for SARS-CoV-2 began on 28 January 2020 at the NICD and after the first case was confirmed on 5th March 2020, testing was expanded to a larger network of private and NHLS laboratories. Laboratory testing was conducted for people meeting the case definition for persons under investigation (PUI). This definition was updated several times over the reporting period but at different times included (i) symptomatic individuals seeking testing, (ii) hospitalised individuals for whom testing was done, (iii) individuals in high-risk occupations, (iv) individuals in outbreak settings, and (v) individuals identified through community screening and testing (CST) programmes which were implemented in April 2020 and was discontinued from the week beginning 17th May. CST was implemented differently in different provinces, and ranged from mass screening approaches (including asymptomatic individuals) to screening of individuals in contact with a confirmed case to targeted testing of clusters of cases. Respiratory specimens were submitted to testing laboratories. Testing was performed using reverse transcriptase real-time PCR, which detects SARS-CoV-2 viral genetic material. Laboratories used any one of several in-house and commercial PCR assays to test for the presence of SARS-CoV-2 RNA. Testing for SARS-CoV-2 using rapid antigen-based tests was implemented towards the end of October 2020. Results of reported rapid antigen-based tests are included in this report, however data are incomplete and efforts are ongoing to improve data completeness.

Test results were automatically fed into a data warehouse after result authorisation. We excluded specimens collected outside South Africa and duplicate entries of the same test for an individual. From week 49 of 2020 onwards, test data were reported from the Notifiable Medical Conditions Surveillance System (NMCSS). Date of specimen receipt in the laboratory was used when date of specimen collection was missing. Proportion testing positive (PTP) was calculated as the number of positive tests/total number of tests and presented as percentage by multiplying with 100. Testing rates were calculated using mid-year population estimates from Statistics South Africa and expressed as tests per 100,000 (2019 estimates were used from week 10 – 40 of 2020, 2020 estimates were used from week 41 2021 to week 1 of 2022 and 2021 estimates were used from week 2 of 2022 and onwards). Laboratory turnaround times were calculated as the mean number of days between specimen collection and reporting of the result. Categorical variables were compared using the chi-squared test, with a P-value<0.05 considered statistically significant.

Health district and sub-district (in the metros) level results were mapped based on geo-locatable public (approximately 98% of public sector facilities in the country) and private (approximately 84% of private testing facilities) sector testing facilities. Estimates of overall prevalence were derived using regression techniques. Estimates were adjusted to produce district-specific positive test prevalences based on the national average age and sex profile of testing for that week. This adjustment allows more accurate comparison of the proportion testing positive across districts. Districts with fewer than 20 tests reported during the week have been excluded from the analysis.

Limitations

- A backlog in testing of samples by laboratories affects the reported number of tests. As a result, numbers tested during this period may change in subsequent reports.
- If higher-priority specimens were tested preferentially this would likely result in an inflated proportion testing positive.
- Different and changing testing strategies (targeted vs. mass testing, PCR vs. antigen-based tests or prioritisation of severe or at-risk cases during epidemic waves) used by different provinces makes percentage testing positive and number of reported tests difficult to interpret and compare.
- Health district and sub-district level were mapped based on the testing facility and not place of residence.
- Patient admission status was categorised based on the reported patient facility and may not reflect whether the patient was actually admitted to hospital.
- Antigen tests may be underestimated as they are used in a number of different settings and results may not be reported.