



NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR
COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Division of the National Health Laboratory Service

CoughWatchSA – Monthly Report

May 2022

This report is based on data collected from 9 March – 24 May 2022

CoughWatchSA is a pilot digital participatory surveillance platform launched by the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) as of 9 March 2022. This platform is open to all South African residents who are 18 years and older. Participants in this programme are requested to report data on symptoms related to influenza-like illness and COVID-19. In addition to this, demographic data, life style factors, underlying medical conditions and vaccination status for seasonal influenza and COVID-19 are captured. Participants who reside in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town are eligible to enrol in the CoughCheck program, where they can request for a home-based test for influenza, RSV and COVID-19

Highlights:

- From a good start in March with 123 enrolments, the number of new enrolments increased by 48% by the 4th week and thereafter no new enrolments have been recorded to date. The number of active participants has fluctuated over the weeks with an average of 40% of participants active each week
 - We would like to encourage you to keep on reporting each week even if you are feeling fine
 - Invite your friends to join the platform – the more participants we have, the stronger the programme
- Women and people aged 30-39 years are the most represented demographic group
- Only 25% of participants have had the flu vaccine – now is the time to get vaccinated if you want to protect yourself against flu this winter
- 85% of people have had the COVID-19 vaccine
 - 42% had the Johnson & Johnson
 - 58% had the Pfizer vaccine

Make sure you are fully vaccinated and have had all the recommended booster shots- a link to updated COVID-19 vaccine guidance can be found [here](#)

- Proportion of people reporting fever and cough is increasing each week – reflecting increasing COVID-19 circulation and also that we are entering the winter respiratory virus season
- 36% of people were eligible for home based testing, from which 76% were successfully enrolled. Remember if you have symptoms and live in Johannesburg, Hill Crest/Durban, Cape Town and surrounding areas you can access free home-based testing through linking to the cough check program
 - Overall 40% of tested people tested positive for COVID19
 - Overall 8% of tested people tested positive for influenza
 - Overall 2 of tested people tested positive for RSV

Enrolments

Figure 1 shows the total enrolments and weekly proportion of active participants (i.e. proportion of participants who have submitted a follow-up symptoms questionnaire on a weekly basis). Since the start of the pilot in March 2022, we are seeing a decrease in the number of active participants

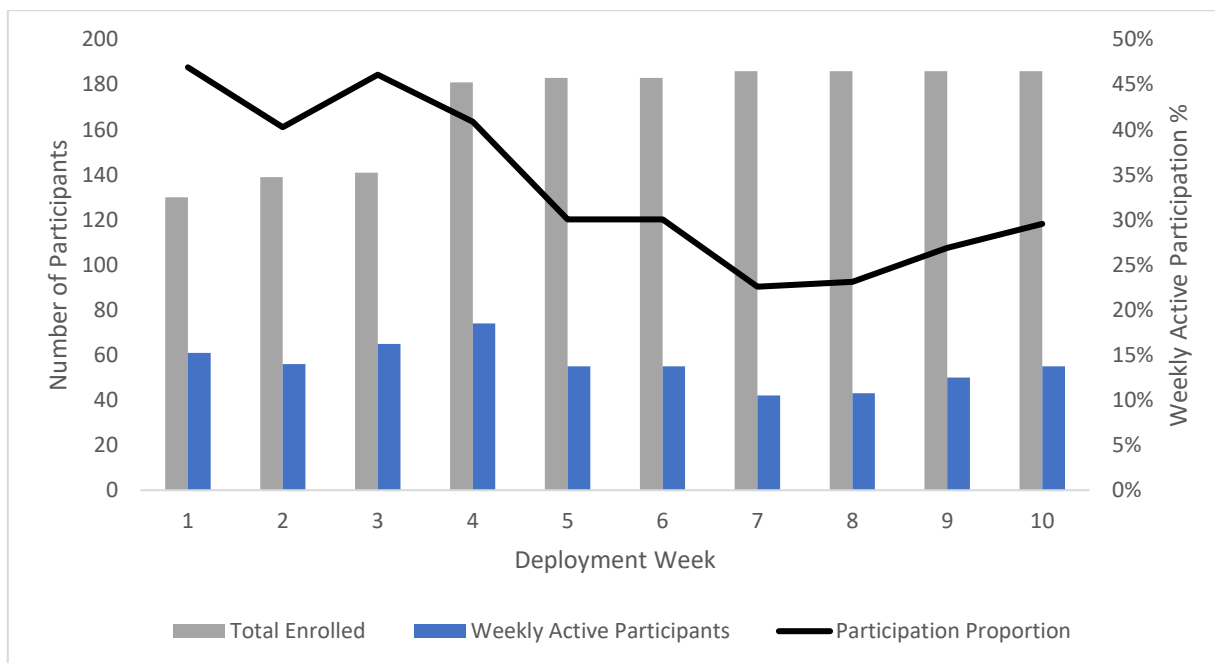


Figure 1: Total number of enrolments and weekly percent of active participants from CoughWatchSA

Figure 2 shows the breakdown of enrolments by province. We have participants in all provinces in South Africa, with Gauteng having the most enrolments to date

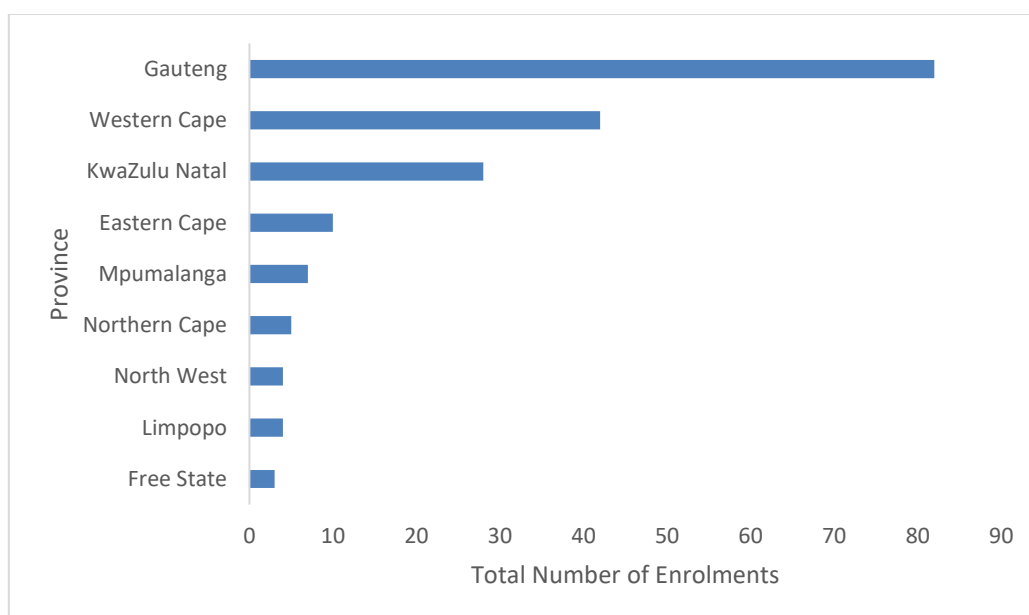


Figure 2: Total number of enrolments by province in South Africa from CoughWatchSA March-May 2022

Table1: Baseline characteristics of participants from CoughWatchSA March – May 2022

VARIABLE	N(%)
AGE GROUP (N=186)	
18-29 YEARS	29(15%)
30-39 YEARS	67(36%)
40-49 YEARS	47(26%)
50-59 YEARS	23(13%)
60+ YEARS	20(11%)
GENDER (N=186)	
MAN	46(25%)
WOMAN	137(74%)
GENDER NON-CONFORMING	2(1%)
PREFER TO SELF-DESCRIBE	1(1%)
HIGHEST EDUCATION LEVEL	
POSTGRADUATE	72(38%)
UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE/DIPLOMA	48(26%)
CERTIFICATE/FET COLLEGE QUALIFICATION	24(13%)
MATRIC CERTIFICATE	32(17%)
HIGH SCHOOL	9(5%)
PRIMARY SCHOOL	0
NO FORMAL EDUCATION	1(1%)
DAYTIME ACTIVITY (N=186)	
EMPLOYED - FULL-TIME	119(64%)
EMPLOYED - PART-TIME	14(8%)
SELF-EMPLOYED	21(11%)
LEARNER/STUDENT	4(2%)
UNEMPLOYED	17(9%)
RETIRED (AT HOME)	8(4%)
OTHER	3(1%)
VACCINATION STATUS	
SEASONAL INFLUENZA	46/186(25%)
RECEIVING AT LEAST ONE DOSE OF ANY COVID19 VACCINE	158/186(85%)
JOHNSON & JOHNSON COVID-19	66/158(42%)
PFIZER COVID-19	92/158(58%)

Symptom Reports

Figure 3 shows the total number of symptoms ever reported on the CoughWatchSA since the start of the program and the proportion of these symptom reports in relation to all the symptoms on the platform. The top three symptoms are runny nose, cough and headache

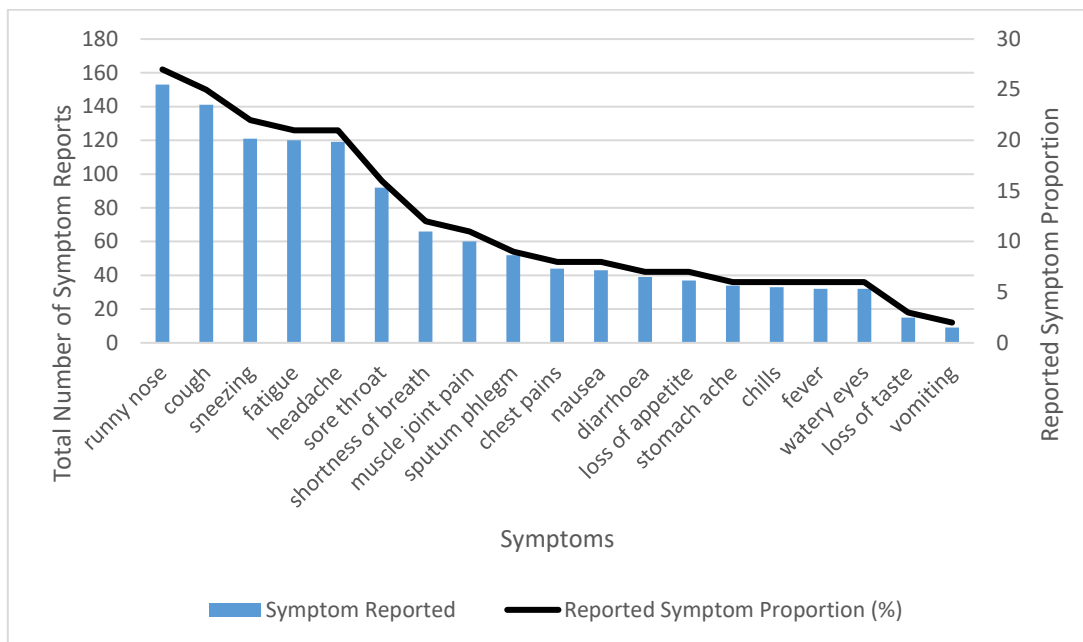


Figure 3: Total number and proportion of symptoms ever reported between March – May 2022 from CoughWatchSA, South Africa

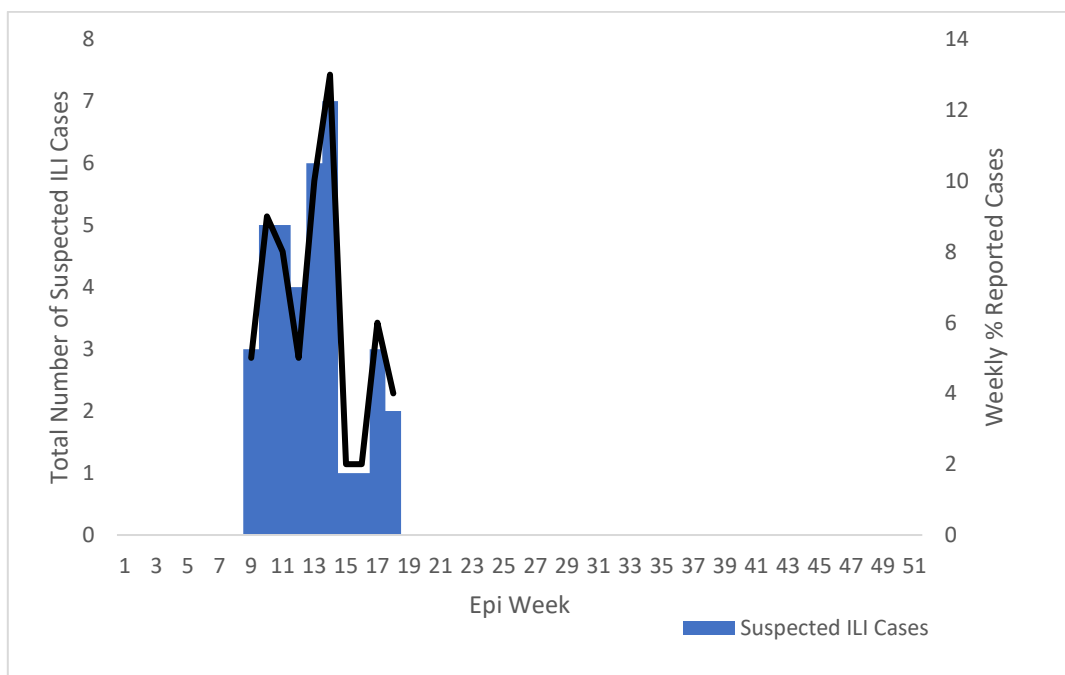


Figure 4: Weekly number and proportion of people reporting fever and cough (suspected influenza-like illness (ILI)) from CoughWatchSA, South Africa March-May 2022

The WHO case definition used for ILI is an onset of a cough, fever or measured temperature $\geq 38^{\circ}\text{C}$ and symptom duration of ≤ 10 days

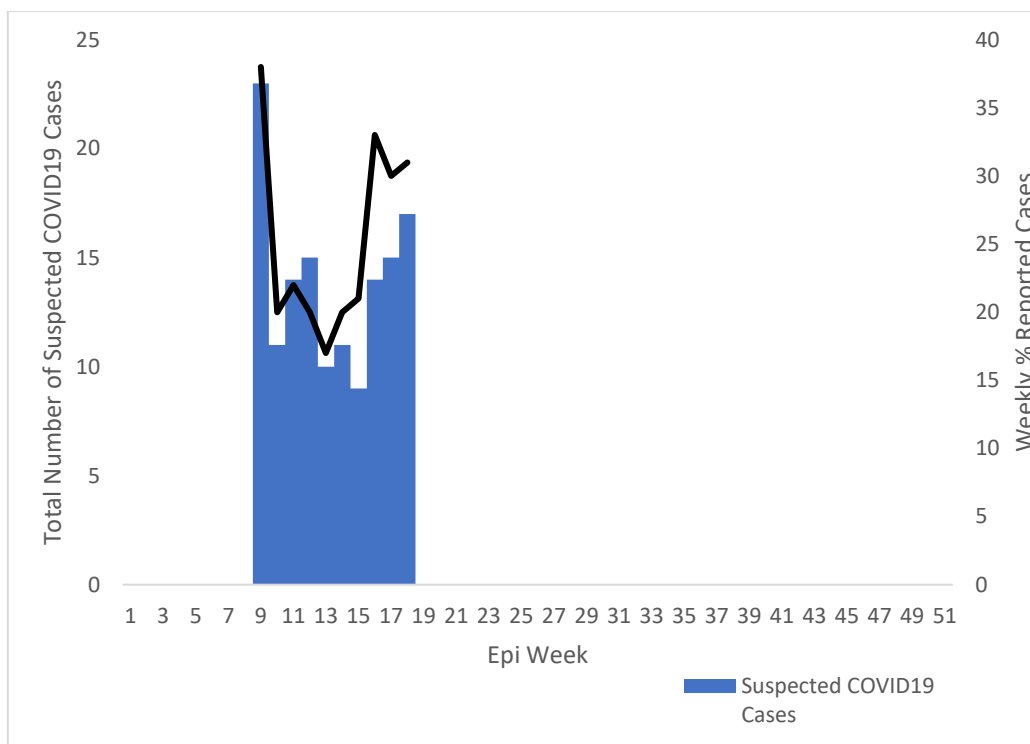


Figure 5: Total number of suspected COVID19 cases based on WHO case definition for COVID19 and the weekly proportion of reported cases from CoughWatchSA, South Africa March-May 2022

WHO case definition applied for COVID-19 is a combination of 3 or more of the following symptoms: fever, cough, headache, chills, runny nose, sore throat, sneezing, fatigue, sputum phlegm, watery eyes, stomach ache, shortness of breath, muscle joint pain, chest pain, loss of appetite, nausea, loss of smell, diarrhoea, vomiting

Home-based Testing

Total number of eligible participants: 67/186 (36%)

Total number of complete enrolments with results: 52/67 (78%)

Table 2: Total number of positive cases for COVID19, Influenza and RSV detected through the home-based testing in South Africa, March-May 2022

Province	COVID19	Influenza	RSV
Gauteng (n=23)	8 (35%)	4 (17%)	0
KwaZulu Natal (n=17)	11 (65%)	0	0
Western Cape (n=12)	2 (17%)	0	1(8%)
Overall	21(40%)	4(8%)	1(2%)