



South African Measles and Rubella Monthly Surveillance Report, 10 November 2023

Issued by the National Institute for Communicable Diseases based on laboratory testing data

1. Measles Surveillance

- A total of 1267 laboratory-confirmed measles cases were reported between epidemiological week 40 2022 to week 43 2023 in South Africa. Limpopo had reported the most number of cases (531), followed by Gauteng (248) and then North West (225).
- Provinces with the least number of confirmed measles cases are the Eastern Cape and Northern Cape who have reported 10 and 13, respectively. KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and Free State have reported 55, 120 and 35 cases, respectively, since the beginning of 2023.

An overview of the measles surveillance data for epidemiological week 40 2022- week 43 2023 is provided in the tables below:

Table 1: Cases of laboratory-confirmed measles tested by the NICD from all provinces in South Africa from epidemiological week 40, 2022 to week 43, 2023. (FS=Free State; GP=Gauteng; KZN=KwaZulu-Natal; LP=Limpopo; MP=Mpumalanga NW=North West; NC=Northern Cape, WC = Western Cape).

Month	EC	FS	GP	KZN	LP	MP	NW	NC	WC	Total
September	0	0	2	0	11	0	1	0	1	15
October	1	1	2	2	51	13	1	1	1	73
November	0	4	8	2	62	52	56	2	2	188
December	0	9	7	1	24	15	72	1	1	130
January	3	9	48	7	57	15	44	0	4	187
February	2	5	69	5	99	11	36	3	2	232
March	0	1	24	3	90	1	6	0	1	126
April	0	1	12	0	51	1	1	0	3	69
May	2	0	8	1	48	2	0	0	0	61
June	0	0	7	3	19	2	0	0	4	35
July	1	0	7	7	3	1	2	0		21
August	0	1	16	6	7	1	4	0	0	35
September 2023	0	2	14	14	2	6	2	0	4	44
October 2023	1	2	24	4	7	0	0	6	7	51
Total	10	35	248	55	531	120	225	13	30	1267

Table 2: Measles laboratory-confirmed cases by age group, epidemiological week 36 2023-43 2023

Age	EC	FS	GP	KZN	LP	MP	NW	NC	WC	SA
>1			7	2		2	1		2	14
1-4 years		2	7	5	4	2	1	1	4	26
5-9 years		2	16	5	4	2	2	4	4	39
10-14 years			8	1	2			1	3	15
15+	1		10	3				1	3	18
Total	1	4	48	16	10	6	4	7	16	112

- In week 43 2023, a total of 14 measles cases were reported from six of the nine provinces in South Africa, Gauteng (5), Free State (1), KwaZulu-Natal (1), Limpopo (1) and Northern Cape (2) and the Western Cape (4) (Figure 1).

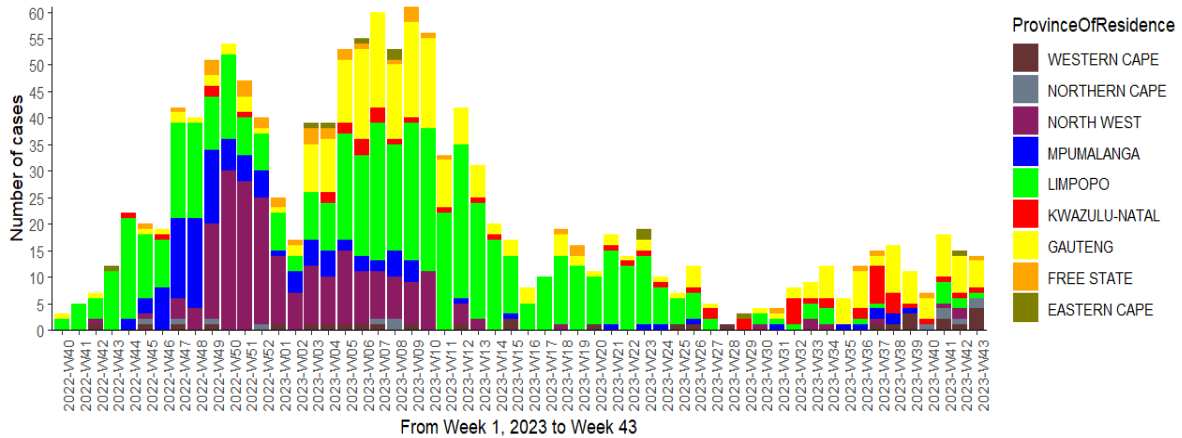


Figure 1. The epidemiological curve of the number of laboratory-confirmed measles cases by Province in South Africa, from epidemiological week 40 2022 to week 43 2023 by specimen collection dates.

2. Rubella surveillance

- A total of 153 laboratory-confirmed rubella cases have been reported in South Africa from week 1 to week 43 2023. The majority (121) of the cases were reported in the Western Cape (Figure 2), while the Eastern Cape reported a few (19) cases.
- Sporadic cases were reported in all the other provinces, since the beginning of the year. Most provinces (FS, KZN, MP, NW, NC) have reported only one case of rubella while Limpopo reported (2) cases and Gauteng (6).
- The number of cases from September to October 2023 had more than doubled (Table 3).

An overview of the rubella surveillance data for September-October 2023 is provided in the tables below:

Table 3: Cases of laboratory-confirmed rubella tested by the NICD from all provinces in South Africa from epidemiological week 36, 2022 to week 43, 2023. (FS=Free State; GP=Gauteng; KZN=KwaZulu-Natal; LP=Limpopo; MP=Mpumalanga NW=North West; NC=Northern Cape, WC = Western Cape).

Month	EC	FS	GP	KZN	LP	MP	NW	NC	WC	SA
September	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	32	36
October	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	75	87
Jan-Oct 2023	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	107	123

Table 4: Rubella Laboratory confirmed cases by age group, epidemiological week 36-43 2023.

Age	EC	FS	GP	KZN	LP	MP	NW	NC	WC	SA
>1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
1-4 years	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	41	42
5-9 years	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	58	70
10-14 years	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3
15+	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	5
Total	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	107	123

- Whilst sporadic cases have been noted across the country, an increase in laboratory-confirmed cases was noted in Western Cape in week 36, 14 were reported in the City of Cape Town in the Khayelitsha sub-district. Most of the cases reported in Khayelitsha were among children between 5-9 years.
- Sub-districts in WC that reported most of the cases were Tygerberg (27), Khayelitsha (25), Southern (23) and Mitchells Plain (17)
- The most affected age group are children between the ages of 5-9 years old (70), followed by the 1-4 years old (42) (Table 4).
- In the Northern Cape there was a rubella outbreak in Hopetown situated in the Pixley ka Seme District Municipality.

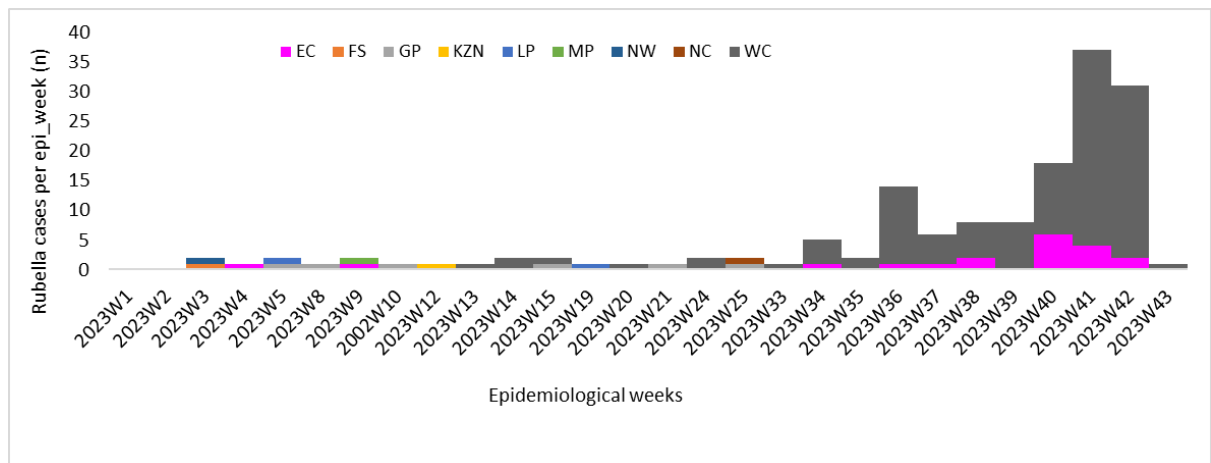


Figure 2. The epidemiological curve of the number of laboratory-confirmed rubella cases by Province in South Africa, from epidemiological week 01-43,2023 by specimen collection dates.

Conclusion

Sporadic cases of measles are reported, especially in Gauteng. There was a noticeable increase in cases reported in the Western Cape and Northern Cape provinces. A rise in cases from the Northern Cape was due to a measles outbreak reported in a children's home on the last week of October 2023.

Similarly, there was an increase in the number of rubella cases reported since week 36 2023 in the Western Cape. The outbreak started in Khayelitsha but soon spread to other districts in the Western Cape.

Strengthening surveillance for measles cases and rubella is recommended so as not to miss cases in the areas where cases are not reported. Clinicians across the country are urged to be on the lookout for measles and rubella cases.

Provinces are also encouraged to investigate the last date of vaccination of reported cases to distinguish between measles vaccine-induced cases from true measles cases. Prevention and control of measles outbreaks can only be achieved through vaccination. Healthcare workers are advised to be vigilant for symptoms of rubella and notify and report cases. Parents should be advised to bring the vaccination booklets and cards when taking the children to the healthcare facilities, which will allow the clinicians to do vaccination catchup for the missed measles vaccine doses. Presently no public health action is

required following identification of cases of rubella, as no vaccine is available in the public sector.

Diagnostic testing for fever-rash surveillance includes a completed measles-rubella case investigation form (found at <https://www.nicd.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Measles-Rubella-CIF.pdf>) and blood for serological testing together with a throat swab or urine for PCR testing. These samples should be submitted to the NICD where they will be tested for measles and rubella IgM antibodies. Based on details in the case investigation form, PCR for measles or rubella will be done.

For more information about measles, case definition, notification, investigation, and guidelines for measles management including vaccination, please refer to our website: <https://www.nicd.ac.za/diseases-a-z-index/measles/>. Healthcare workers are encouraged to submit reports on any adverse events following immunization (AEFI) through the Med Safety application (<https://medsafety.sahpra.org.za/>) or through submitting a case reporting form to their district surveillance office.