

MEASLES OUTBREAK IN THE PACIFIC - SITUATION REPORT No. 8

Joint WHO/UNICEF Measles Outbreak Response and Preparedness in the Pacific

Reporting date:	23 December 2019
Reporting period:	18-23 December 2019

Event highlights

- Measles outbreaks are ongoing in four Pacific Islands Countries and areas (PICs; Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, American Samoa), which are diverse in scale and stage of the outbreak, as well as the country context.
- A laboratory confirmed case has also been reported from **Kiribati** while one case is being investigated in **Niue**.
- The situation in **Samoa** is stabilizing and post-peak, with decreasing numbers of cases. The state of emergency has been extended till 29 December 2019. To date, there have been 79 measles-related deaths (no death in the last 24 hours).
- **Tonga** is seeing a 5th wave of measles transmission, with fewer numbers of new cases being reported in recent weeks. The situation is stable.
- **Fiji** has not reported new cases in the last week and a huge drive towards 95% vaccination coverage by Christmas eve is ongoing with rapid vaccination started by Northern and Western divisions
- **American Samoa** has not reported any new cases since last week (situation report No. 7).
- Heightened surveillance to identify possible measles cases in all other PICs is needed and ongoing, as well as continued strengthening of preparedness and response activities in unaffected countries.
- Vaccine availability is currently ensured in all PICs, and a contingency plan in place in case of any additional demand.
- WHO/UNICEF Pacific Measles Communication Toolkit: 11 PICs are being supported to adapt and implement the WHO/UNICEF Pacific Measles Communication Toolkit, in both French and English.
- Travel advisories under Article 43 of the IHR (2005) are currently in place in several PICs: American Samoa, Solomon Island, Marshall Island, and Tokelau.

Situation Update

As of 23 December, four Pacific Islands Countries and areas (PICs) have measles outbreaks: Samoa, Tonga, American Samoa, and Fiji. Additionally, Kiribati has recently reported a single laboratory-confirmed case of measles, and one case is under investigation in Niue. The overview of declarations of outbreaks and States of Emergency is summarised in Table 1, the epidemiological situation in Table 2, and further summarised by country below. PICs without measles outbreak at present have been assessed by WHO for the risk of a potential measles outbreaks (rapid risk assessment), and preventive SAIs and additional preparedness activities are ongoing and planned.

Table 1. Overview of declarations of outbreaks and estate of emergency, in Pacific Islands Countries and areas with measles cases.

Country	Outbreak declared	State of emergency declared
Samoa	October 16, 2019	November 15, 2019; extended till 29 Dec 2019
Tonga	October 22, 2019	No
Fiji	November 7, 2019	No
American Samoa	December 8, 2019	December 8, 2019
Kiribati	No	No

Table 2. Overview of number of measles cases, morbidity and mortality and trend, in Pacific Islands Countries and areas with measles outbreaks.

Country	Reported	Reported Cases ^a	Reported Deaths	Cumulative In-patients	Case-fatality rate ^b	Trend
Samoa	Dec 22, 2019	5,552	79	1,762	1.4%	Post-peak, decreasing
Tonga	Dec 20, 2019	581	0	15	0%	Stable, 5th wave
Fiji	Dec 23, 2019	24	0	12	0%	Stable, contained
American Samoa	Dec 14, 2019	10	0	0	0%	Stable, contained
Kiribati	Dec 19, 2019	1	0	0	0%	Under investigation

^a This table follows the official reported case as reported in the national sitreps

^b Case-fatality rate = proportion of reported deaths within the total number of reported cases.

Table 3. Overview of Measles Containing Vaccines delivered and for delivery by UNICEF.

Country	Total MCV received in country since 01 Oct (doses)	Scheduled Deliveries (as of 23 Dec)
Samoa	265,500	0
Fiji	735,000	0
Tonga	58,000	10,000
Vanuatu	80,000	0
Kiribati	14,000	0
Nauru	3,000	0
FSM	20,000	0
RMI	2,500	0
Solomon Islands	60,860	0
Cook Islands	1,000	3,000
Niue	2,000	0
Tokelau	2,000	0
Tuvalu	9,500	0
Total	1,254,360	13,000

Samoa

- Number of cases per day reducing and situation stabilizing, active transmission ongoing.
- 5,552 measles cases have been reported as of 22 December 2019 2pm, mostly on Upolu (see map on Figure 2), including 32 in the previous 24 hours. The number of cases per day is reducing and situation stabilizing; trend of slow down continues, but slowly. In total, 79 measles-related deaths have been recorded (no death in the last 24 hours)
- 1,795 measles admissions in total; ~91% have recovered, been discharged, and returned home.
- 82 hospitalized currently; admissions include 10 critically ill persons in intensive care and high-dependency care units (ICU/HDU).
- Children aged 6-11 months are most highly affected (attack-rate 260 cases per 1,000 population), followed by infants 0-5 months (159 per 1,000) and children aged 1-4 years (75 per 1,000).
- Emerging issue of post-measles infections among affected children to be monitored.

Immunization

- Over 90% of the target population of 6 months to 60 years has been vaccinated; however, age-specific coverage data are still being collated and validated.
- One adverse-related event following immunization; child was treated and fully recovered, and at home.
- Samoa passed a law on making measles vaccination compulsory (binding law into effect on 1 January 2020: “Law of Love”).
- Vaccination campaign is still ongoing, targeting unvaccinated people including young children.

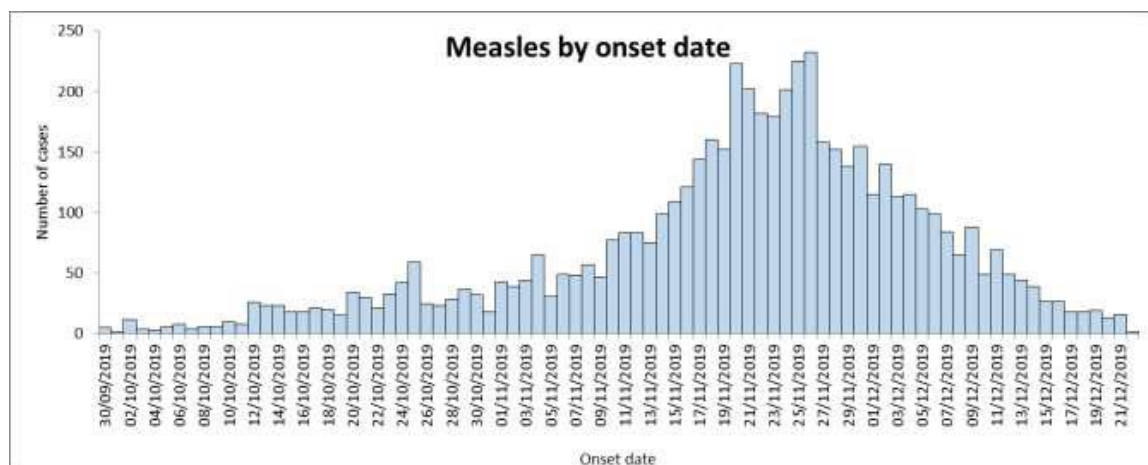


Figure 1. Epicurve Measles in Samoa by date of onset, date of report: 22 December 2019 (N=5,552).

Source: Health Emergency Operations Centre (HEOC) Situation Report, Ministry of Health Samoa; Incident Name: Measles outbreak - October 2019; Sitrep No. 37.

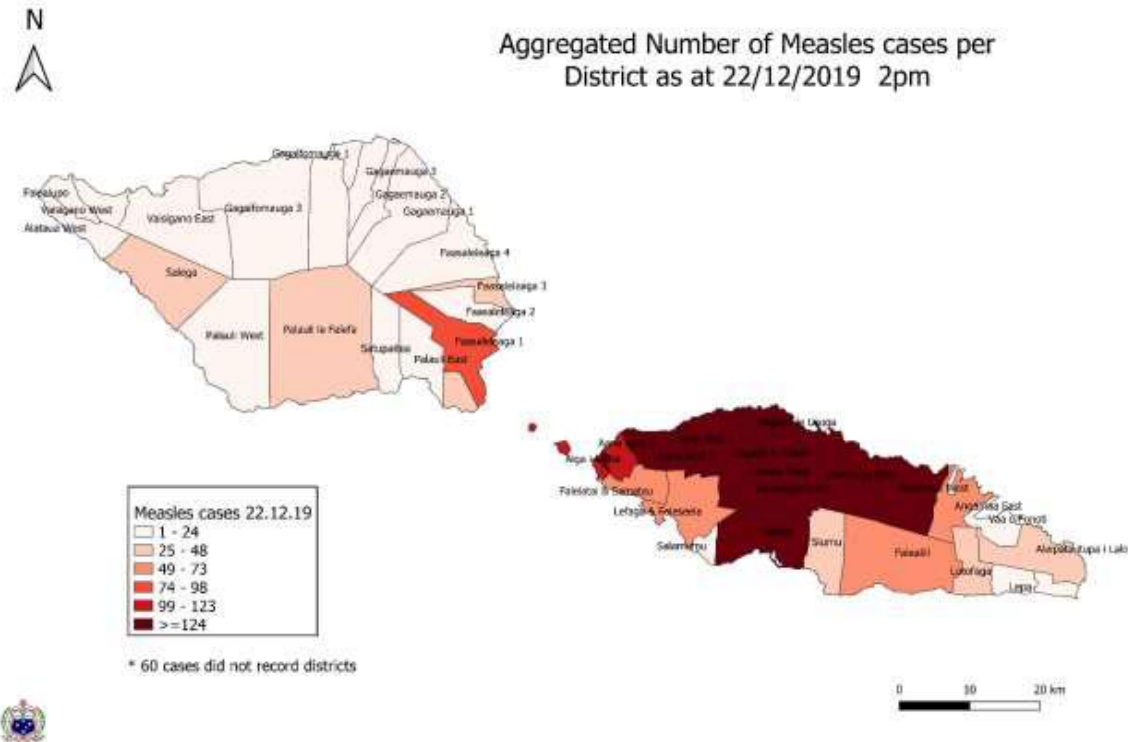


Figure 2. Aggregated number of measles cases in Samoa, by district, date of report: 22 December 2019 2pm (N=5,552). Source: Health Emergency Operations Centre (HEOC) Situation Report, Ministry of Health Samoa; Incident Name: Measles outbreak - October 2019; Sitrep No. 37.

Tonga

- Tonga is seeing a 5th wave of measles transmission, with fewer numbers of new cases being reported in recent weeks. Although it is too soon to call the outbreak post-peak, it appears to be slowing.
- As of 23 December 2019, 592 confirmed or suspected cases of measles have been identified in Tonga; (90%) cases in total have occurred on Tongatapu. Cases have been reported to be mild with 15 hospitalizations with no deaths. Most of the cases have been managed in home isolation. Given that the duration of illness is typically less than 2 weeks, it is estimated that at least 94% of the 564 reported measles cases will have already recovered from their illnesses.
- The age group primarily affected remains those aged 10-24 years (male and female).
- Mass vaccination efforts target groups at greatest risk of measles, as well as those at greatest risk of severe illness, including: adolescents and young adults aged 10 to 24 years, 'zero dose' for 6-11-month olds, as well as extended family contacts and travellers.
- Epidemiologists from the US Centre for Disease Control (CDC) are investigating the immunization status of the cases that report to have received vaccination (breakthrough cases);
- Most government offices will close over the Christmas period, but key health officials will continue to provide services.
- Completed vaccination of all children aged 6 -11 months and persons between the ages 10 -24 years across the country.

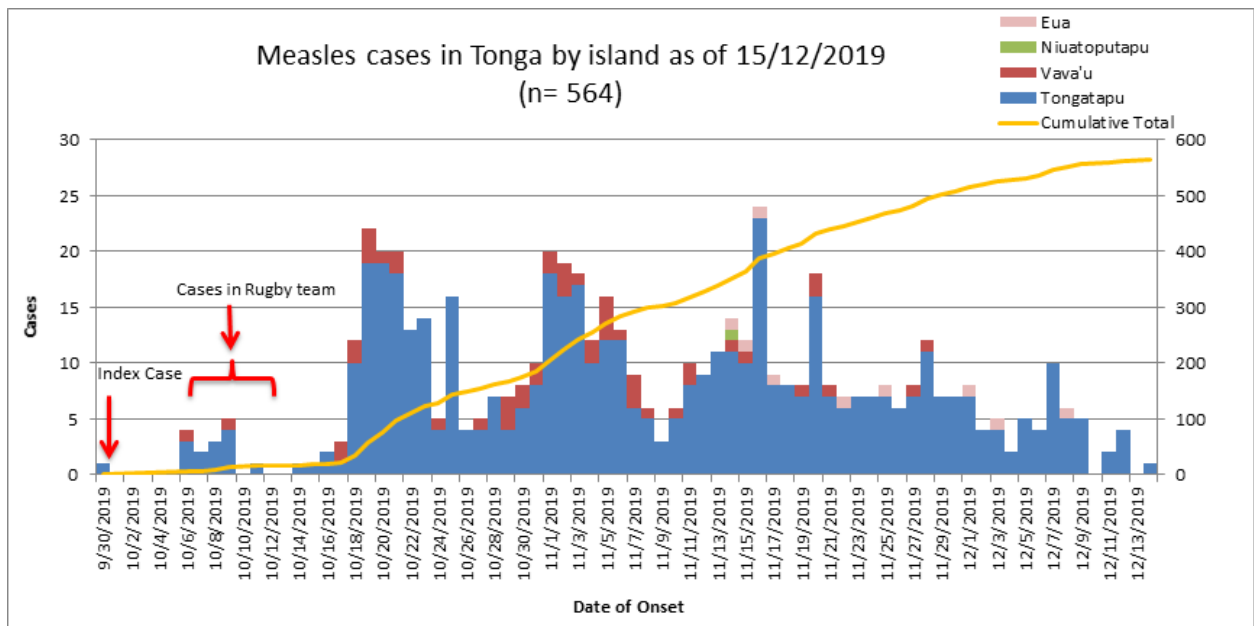


Figure 3. Epicurve Measles in Tonga by date of onset, date of report: 15 December 2019 (N=564).

Source: SITUATION REPORT Tonga Measles Outbreak 2019, SITREP Number: 10, Date of Issue 18/12/2019

Fiji

- Aiming for 95% vaccination coverage by Christmas eve is ongoing with >90 % coverage in central division and rapid vaccination started by Northern and Western divisions.
- Total 24 confirmed cases (10 females, 13 males, 1 sex unknown, age 0-40 years); all cases have been linked and confined to the Central Division. There have been 12 hospitalizations and no deaths reported.
- Since the outbreak was declared, > 200,000 people in Fiji have been immunized against measles, with current 98% coverage in the Central Division. The third wave of the targeted vaccination campaign, extended to all divisions, will continue aiming for >90% coverage by 24 December 2019 (#VaccinateByChristmas).
- Mass vaccination campaign was conducted in Serua/Namosi Sub-Division where the index case for this measles outbreak had originated from.
- Special Travel advisory with Ministry of Food and Agriculture/Tourism has been developed concerning cruise liners traveling to Fiji from Measles affected ports

American Samoa

- Since the outbreak and State of Emergency were declared on 8 December 2019, 10 confirmed cases have been reported in six geographically spread villages as of 14 December 2019; no severe cases or deaths.

- No reliable data available on measles vaccination coverage, as reported by US CDC, however information from the recent mass vaccination campaigns showed coverage of MMR1 in all schools at 97% and 2 doses of MMR (4 years and older) at 88%.
- December 11, 2019 American Samoa began its campaign to vaccinate all adults with no evidence of MMR vaccine. During the vaccination campaign, amnesty will be allowed for illegal immigrants who receive the MMR vaccine.

Kiribati

- One laboratory confirmed case: a 11-month-old child with onset date 29 November 2019.
- South Tarawa (Kiribati's main island) is densely populated with persons living with extended families, which could facilitate rapid transmission of the virus in susceptible individuals.
- Introduction of MR zero dose and the defaulter tracing campaign started on Friday 20 December in outer islands.

Actions to date

Response & Preparedness in the Pacific

This sitrep is reporting on new activities in the reporting period; see Sitrep 1-7 for updates on previous activities.

- WHO & UNICEF participate in a weekly VTC on measles preparedness with regional partners and representatives of the national health authorities of the US Affiliated Pacific Islands, hosted by US CDC.
- UNICEF is providing technical assistance to preparedness and supplementary immunisation activities, effective vaccine management and data quality in 13 countries.
- WHO continues to work with PICs and regional partners to update measles risk assessments for countries with immunity gaps and those with limited response capacities.
- Laboratory capacity at WHO Collaborating Center Mataika House strengthened to perform measles PCR testing
- Arrangements for sample testing in place in the Victorian Infectious Diseases Reference Laboratory - Australia, Lab plus – Auckland and Hawaii
- WHO completed and shared measles clinical management guidelines and is developing a training and response pack on clinical management and emergency preparedness and response, including hospital contingency planning.
- WHO continues to provide guidance to PICs on the development of travel advisories, and its implications.
- WHO/UNICEF Pacific Measles Communication Toolkit: 11 PICs are being supported to adapt and implement the WHO/UNICEF Pacific Measles Communication Toolkit, in both French and English.
- Regional measles Facebook campaign: WHO is implementing a Pacific regional measles social media awareness campaign, targeting populations in all PICs, and in Australia and New Zealand. Messaging

focuses on strengthening awareness of signs and symptoms, promoting traveller vaccination and demand generation for vaccination. As of 19/12/2019, this campaign has reached 551,709 Pacific Facebook users in 20 PICs, with 3,282,280 views (Pacific profiles each have multiple sightings of the materials).

- WHO supports procurement/shipment of critical supplies, including PPE, vitamin A and IPC supplies/consumables. IPC protocols are in place.
- Activation of partners include WHO, UNICEF, CDC, SPC and Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN)
- Bilateral and multilateral partners supporting including Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)- Australia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) – New Zealand and United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
- WHO monitors the situation and need in other PIC; American Samoa declined offer for assistance by WHO.

Samoa

- Mental health and psychological support is ongoing for front liners, in-patients, and grieving families.
- UNICEF is in discussion with the MoH on the standardization of communication messages on Handwashing and Household Water Treatment and Storage.
- MoH has started system strengthening and recovery plan following the measles outbreak. WHO supports health system recovery, including appropriate management of post-measles infections.
- MOH and UNICEF developed a draft short and medium/term plans for strengthening Routine immunization and vaccination of the children between ages of 3-21 years.
- UNICEF drafted a revised Immunization schedule for partially immunized or unimmunized children.
- Temperature monitoring chart and vaccine stock management formats as well as review of E-immunization Registry with MoH-Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) team was done and will be reviewed by MoH and EPI staff for ratification.

Tonga

- WHO is supporting the strengthening of measles surveillance, including zero reporting from health facilities, active case search and reporting from outer islands.

Vanuatu

- Microplanning for risk communication has been conducted in Santo on 20 December 2019, with technical support from one communication specialist and one consultant from UNICEF.
- Sanma Province has started vaccination for high risk population, including workers at tourist sites, taxi drivers, hotel workers.
- UNICEF public notification letters for vaccination campaign dates have been distributed and posted for the general public.

- UNICEF has placed an order for the delivery of 2,000 Vitamin A (100,000 IU) scheduled to be delivered on 23 December 2019.

Table 3. WHO & UNICEF deployment overview as of 23 December 2019.

	WHO					UNICEF
Samoa	In Process	Deployed	Assigned	Completed	WHO total	UNICEF total
Emergency coordination	0	1	0	1	2	1
EMT Coordination & Information management	0	1	0	0	1	0
Clinician	0	0	0	0	0	0
Public Health Specialist	0	0	0	3	3	0
Maternal and Child Health Specialist	0	0	0	0	0	3
Epidemiology/Vaccination Systems	2	0	0	3	5	3
Risk Communications	0	0	0	2	2	2
Infection Prevention Control	0	0	0	2	2	0
Mental Health & Psychosocial Support	1	0	0	1	2	2
WASH Specialist	0	0	0	0	0	1
Child Protection Specialist	0	0	0	0	0	2
Logistics	2	0	0	1	3	1
Finance & Admin	2	1	0	1	4	
ERM trainer	0	0	0	0	0	0
Immunization	2	0	0	2	4	2
Total	9	3	0	16	28	17
Kiribati						
Epidemiologist	0	1	0	0	1	0
Anthropologist	0	1	0	0	1	0
Total	0	2	0	0	2	0
Tonga						
Epidemiology & Surveillance	2	2	0	2	6	0
Finance & Administration	0	0	0	0	0	0
Immunization	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	2	2	0	2	6	0
Fiji (Pacific-wide Response Support)						
Epidemiologist	1	2	0	2	5	0
Risk Communications	3	3	0	2	8	0
Finance & Administration	1	1	0	0	2	0
Logistics	1	2	0	1	4	0
Total	6	8	0	5	19	0

Cook Islands

- Started vaccinating health workers on Saturday 14 December 2019, and continues the vaccination of all frontline workers and health workers.

Federated States of Micronesia

- UNICEF has delivered 20,000 doses of MCV as part of the SIA.

Nauru

- As part of the ongoing support to the response activities, UNICEF has dispatched 2,000 doses of MCV to the MoH.

Niue

- Emergency preparedness workshop with clinical case management exercise completed by WHO.
- Contact tracing started of the suspected case started and is ongoing assessment of immunity gaps is continuing. Meanwhile those who have not yet been vaccinated and health workers started receiving second of dose of measles vaccine.

Solomon Islands

- UNICEF has delivered 16,860 doses of MR vaccine on top of the routine supply of 44,000 doses, to support additional immunization activities.

Tuvalu

- UNICEF delivered 5,000 doses of MR vaccine on 19 December 2019.

Next steps

- Deployment of staff based on WHO emergency preparedness and response plan. Ongoing staff surge deployments in Fiji (Pacific regional support), Samoa, Tonga and Kiribati. Continue to seek support and deployments from GOARN, and EMTs (as needed).
- Clinical management guidelines adapted for the PICs released and shared with all
- WHO provides ongoing response support, including coordination of EMTs for case management as well as technical support for vaccination, surveillance, information management, MHPSS and laboratory. communications and MHPSS
- WHO supports countries with technical guidance during the holiday period; continue technical support both in-country and remotely for all pillars of response.

- Priority preventive immunization; ensure outer island immunization coverage. Conduct mop-up vaccination to ensure all susceptible (particularly children 6—59m) are vaccinated.
- Support transition from outbreak to post-outbreak surveillance, including appropriate use of laboratory testing and implementation of electronic early warning alert system for routine surveillance of epidemic prone diseases in susceptible population planned
- Continuing support for risk communications across the Pacific including appropriate messaging during holiday season to reduce risk.

Cook Islands

- Additional 3,000 doses of MCV is scheduled to be delivered by UNICEF this week.

Fiji

- All divisions will be focusing on house-to-house approach to ensure high vaccination coverage. Special publication to be in newspapers over the weekend highlighting the vaccination areas.

Kiribati

- The health promotion team will be carrying out community awareness through public outreach using megaphones in Eita village to communicate to the community that those above 14 years of age are not at high risk, as MHMS will be focusing vaccination efforts on those under 14 years old.
- UNICEF has placed an order for the delivery of 2,000 Vitamin A (100,000 IU) scheduled to be delivered on 23 December 2019.
- MOH plans to vaccinate all the travellers aged more than 15 years (domestic travel from and to Tarawa at the airport and sea port).

Tonga

- UNICEF will send two ice-lined refrigerators to Tonga.

WHO/UNICEF weekly coordination meeting

The secretariat would be pleased to include the support provided by other partners in the next and subsequent sitreps.

Weekly coordination meetings are held every Wednesdays at 09:30am, **except for the week of Christmas, when it will be held one day earlier, on Tuesday 24 December**, at the WHO office in Suva – please let us know if you will join in person or by Zoom, by emailing Measles2019@who.int. Any change in venue will be advised.

For those wishing to call in:

Join from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or Android: <https://wpro-who.zoom.us/j/5993964937>

Or Telephone: +1 669 900 6833 (US Toll), +1 646 876 9923 (US Toll).

Meeting ID: 599 396 4937.

International numbers available: <https://wpro-who.zoom.us/j/acZxLvmltF>