

The coronavirus disease COVID-19 continues to spread at the regional and global levels. As of 10 December 2022, the global cumulative incidence reached 645 107 394 reported cases and 6 648 088 associated deaths at a case-fatality ratio (CFR) of 1.03%. Meanwhile, the 22 countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) have reported a total of 23 208 136 cases, representing about 3.6% of the global count, with 348 980 associated deaths (CFR 1.5%). Most countries in the Region are in the community transmission phase.

Since the beginning of the outbreak, the country that has reported the highest number of total cases in the Region is Islamic Republic of Iran (7 560 105; 32.58% of the Region's total), followed by Iraq (2 464 771; 10.62%) and Jordan (1 746 997; 7.53%). Islamic Republic of Iran also reported the highest number of total COVID-19 associated deaths (144 658; CFR 1.91%), followed by Pakistan (30 635; CFR 1.94 %) and Tunisia (29 272; CFR 2.55%). The highest CFRs were reported by Yemen (18.07%), followed by Sudan (7.84%) and Syria (5.51%), while the lowest CFRs were reported by United Arab Emirates (0.22%), Bahrain (0.22) and Qatar (0.14%).

During epidemiological week 49, the Region reported a 3% decrease in the number of cases as compared to the previous week (7736 cases compared to 7940 cases). An increase by 73% was also observed for associated deaths (52 deaths in the current week compared to 30 deaths in the previous week).

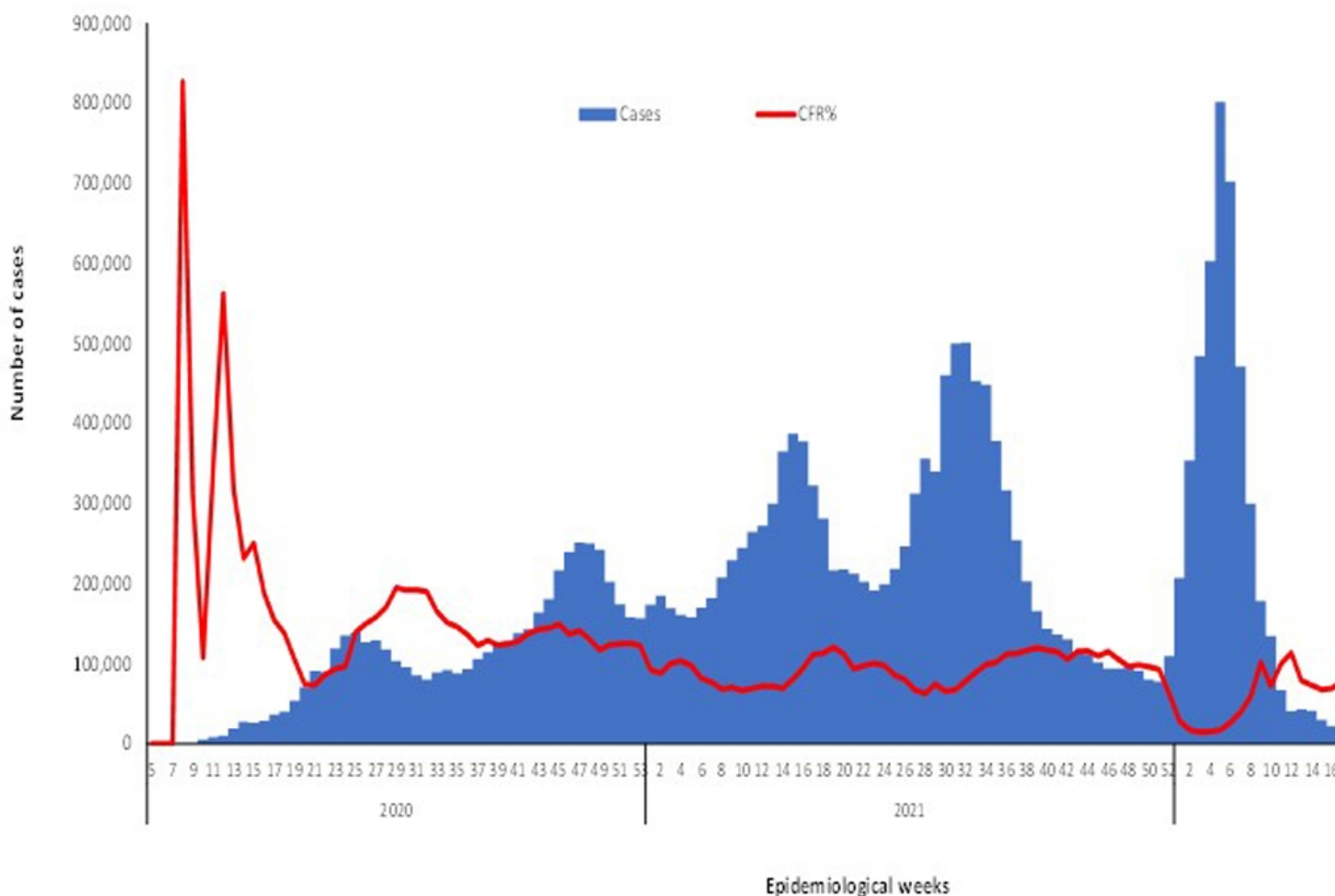
The weekly number of cases have decreased in all countries of the Region except in 6 out of 22 countries as compared to the previous week. This week the number of COVID-19 associated deaths also decreased in all countries of the Region except in 6 out of 22 countries as compared to the previous week.*

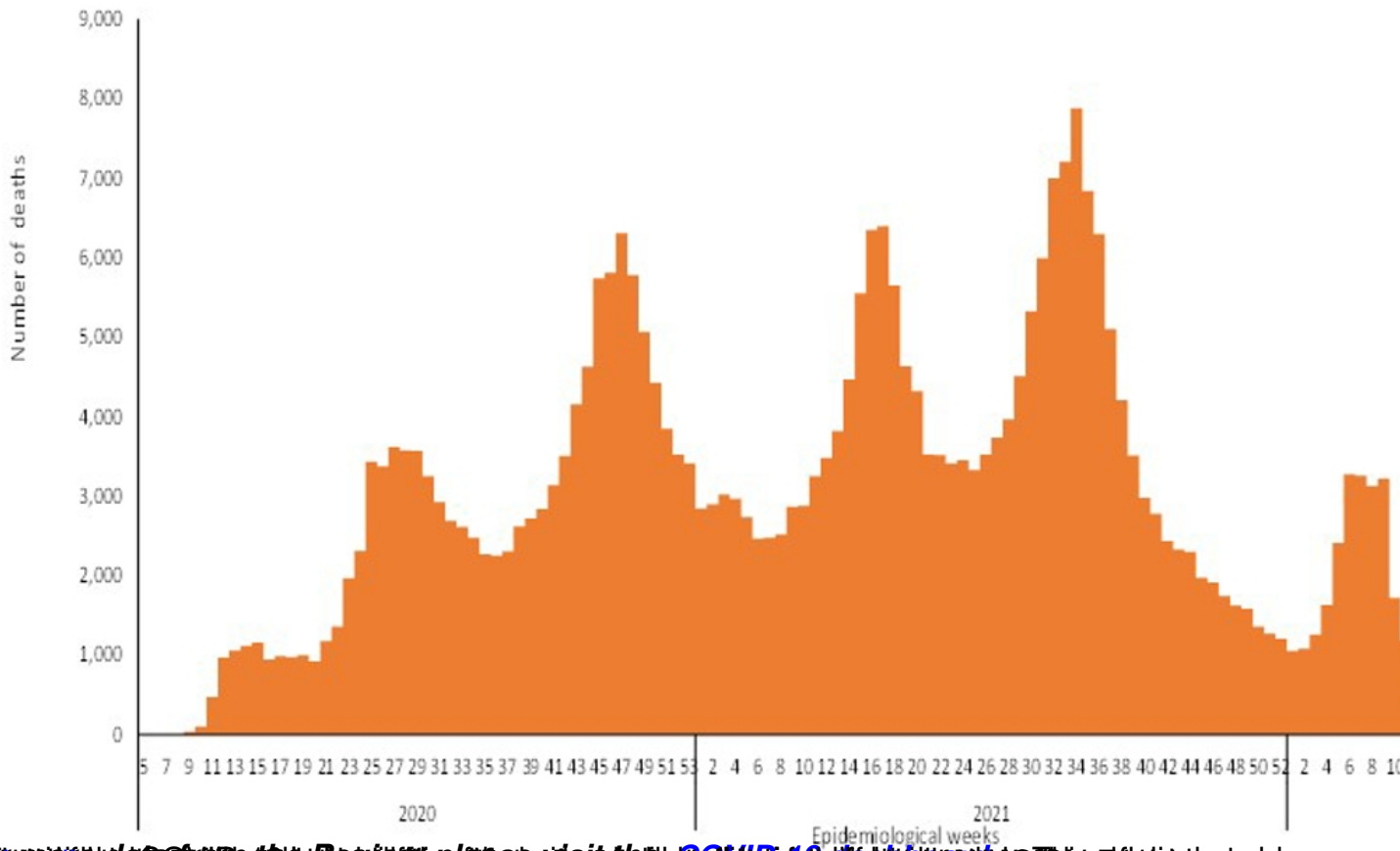
In terms of testing, a total of 441 521 791 laboratory tests were conducted since the start of the outbreak across the Region including 351 477 tests in week 49, which shows a 16% decrease as compared to the previous week when 419 278 tests were conducted. The highest number of PCR tests were reported from United Arab Emirates (197 481 640), followed by Islamic Republic of Iran (54 630 731) and Saudi Arabia (44 857 957). The average positivity rate for the Region is 5.26%. WHO recommends a positivity rate of around 3% to 12% as a general benchmark indicating adequate testing, which was achieved in most countries of the Region.

Meanwhile, COVID-19 vaccination continues across the Region. The total number of doses administered so far in the 22 countries is 843 089 473. Pakistan has administered the highest number of doses at 316 652 198, followed by Islamic Republic of Iran at 154 753 596 and Egypt at 100 825 424. On the other hand, Bahrain (3 476 024), Yemen (1 239 152) and Djibouti (338 051) administrated the lowest number of COVID-19 vaccine doses in the Region.**

Supporting countries in the Region

The regional incident management support team continues to coordinate the response and provide technical support to countries and partners in the Region in the areas of coordination and partnership, surveillance, laboratory capacity, clinical management, infection prevention and control, risk communication and community engagement, points of entry according to the International Health Regulations (2005), research, health systems, and essential health services among others.





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