

COVID-19 CASES IN THE GAZA STRIP

Weekly epidemiological bulletin from 17/11-23/11 to 24/11-30/11 2020

DATA SOURCES: MINISTRY OF HEALTH (MOH) DAILY REPORTS ON COVID-19 IN GAZA STRIP

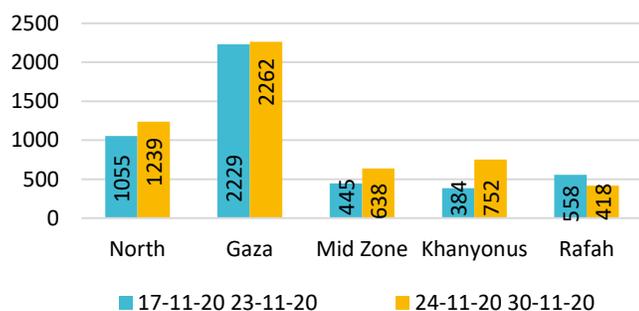
GENERAL

Reporting Period		Weekly cases		Cumulative
		17/11/2020 23/11/2020	24/11/2020 30/11/2020	31/1- 30/11/2020
# of samples tested	total	19,371	18,225	194,247
	# of positive cases	4,671	5,309	21,451
Classification of positive cases by severity*	mild	4,502	5,128	
	moderate	91	92	
	severe	55	58	
	critical	23	31	
Positivity rate	total	24.11%	29.13%	11.0%
	contacts	26.2%	29.6%	
	suspect	31.4%	33.1%	
	surveillance	11.0%	16.4%	

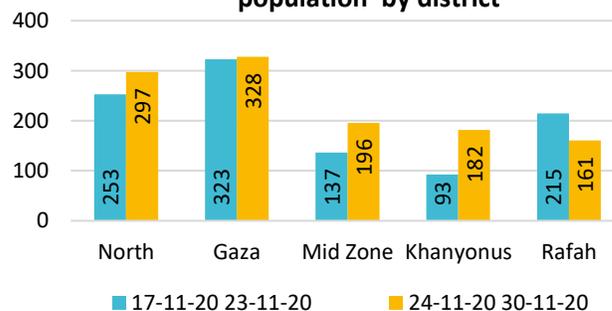
* The reported classification of positive cases by severity reflects the status at first day of detection. This classification may change over time according to progression of COVID-19 infection among patients.

- There is an increase in reported positive COVID-19 cases along all Gaza Strip governorates except for Rafah, where there is a slight decrease. Regarding the incidence per 100,000 population, there is a noticeable increase in the Middle governorate (from 137/100,000 up to 196/100,000) and Khanyounis governorate (from 93/100,000 to 182/100,000).

New reported COVID-19 cases by district



Reported COVID-19 Incidence/100,000 population by district

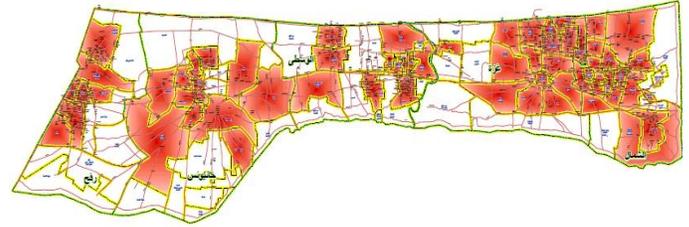


- The PNIPH/WHO supported MOH in developing a traffic light system (TLS) which distributes the newly detected COVID-19 cases geographically throughout the Gaza Strip neighbourhoods during the previous 7 days. This system classifies the neighbourhoods by colour code (Red, Yellow, Green) to visualise the high-risk areas and support decisions.

- The MAP below (developed by MOH) reflects that 63 out of 96 neighbourhoods were coded by red colour on 30 November 2020, compared to around 56 on 23 November.



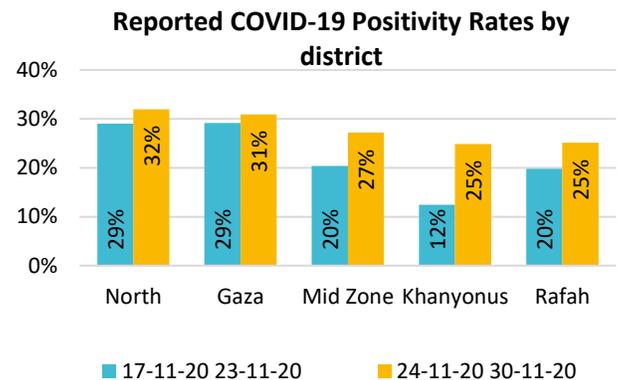
23 November 2020



30 November 2020

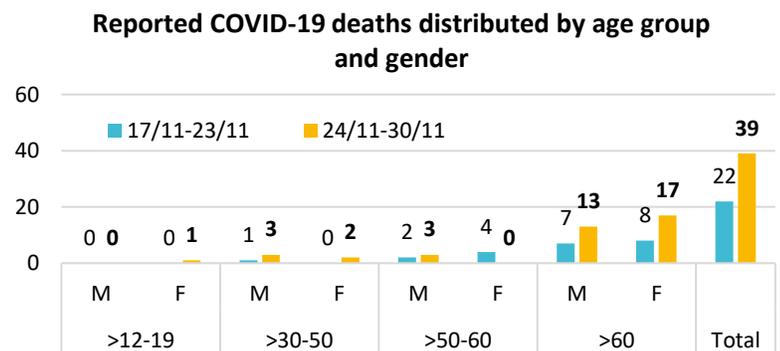
POSITIVITY RATES

- The positivity rate increased from 24% to 29% comparing between the two reporting weeks. There is a continuous trend of increase in positivity rate during November 2020.
- The positivity rate increased during the comparison weeks along all sample types (contacts, suspected cases and random screening) as illustrated in the table above.
- The positivity rate increased in all Gaza Strip districts as presented in the graph on the right.
- The overall positivity rate has been continuously increasing during the last weeks reaching 11%.



DISTRIBUTION OF COVID-19 DEATHS

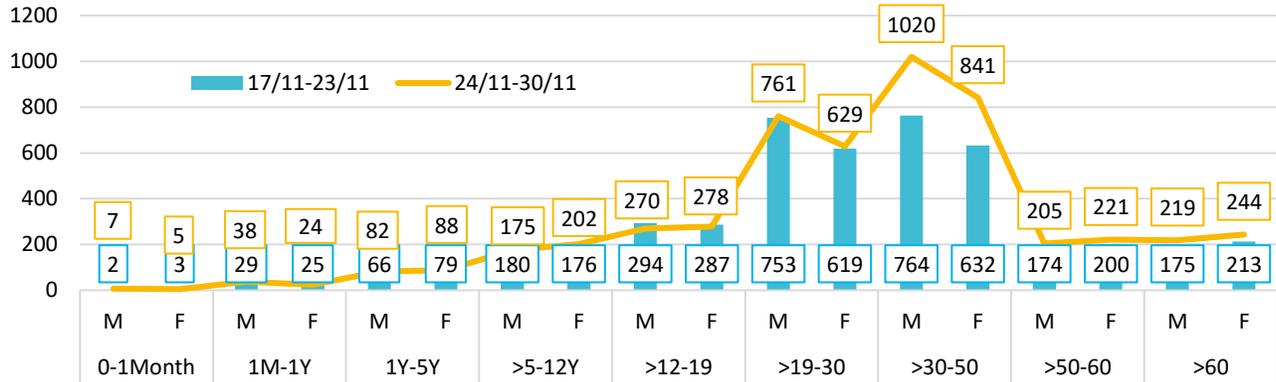
- The figure on the right illustrates the distribution of deaths by gender and age group in the two reporting periods.
- There is a sharp increase in reported deaths: 39 between 24-30 November from 22 in the preceding week, following a continuous increasing trend of COVID-19 deaths during November 2020 as a direct result of increased number of COVID-19 patients among people aged above 60 as highlighted last week.



- One female COVID-19 death was reported among the age group >12-19. The patient was suffering from a brain tumour. This reflects that the outbreak is starting to reach more vulnerable people. In addition, one death was reported among the age group >30-50 between 17-23 November, while deaths increased to 5 (3 males and 2 females) between 24-30 November. These are very alarming indicators of mortality among younger age groups.
- Among the age group >50-60, 4 deaths were reported between 24-30 November, compared to 5 in the preceding week.
- Deaths among the age group >60 increased from 20 to 25 comparing between the two reporting periods.
- According to MOH, the total reported deaths since the start of COVID-19 outbreak in Gaza Strip reached 111 deaths and the total COVID-19 fatality rate reached 0.52% (111/21,331). 69.3% (n=77) of reported deaths occurred during November 2020.

DISTRIBUTION OF COVID-19 CASES AMONG AGE GROUPS AND GENDER

Reported new COVID-19 cases distributed by age groups and gender

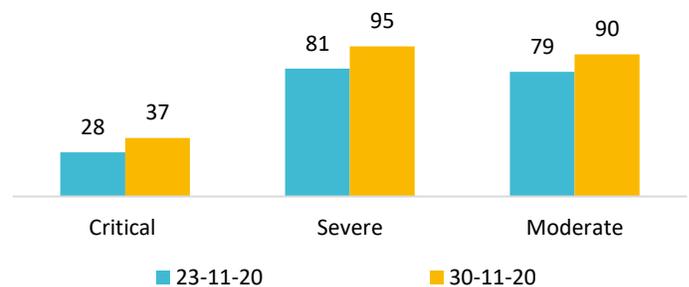


- The figure above illustrates the reported COVID-19 cases distributed by age group and gender comparing between the two reporting weeks. There is an alarming increase in reported cases among age groups above 60 among both males and females.
- Regarding school age groups, there is a slight decrease in this reporting period compared to the preceding week.
- MOH started a new of classification of COVID-19 cases from 30 November 2020: out of the total 806 newly reported COVID-19 cases, 116 (14.4%) were school children aged 6-16 years, while 59 (7.3%) were preschool children, and 35 (4.3%) were university students. These numbers do not reflect if the infection happened in the school setting or not.
- 67% of COVID-19 infections were sourced back to family and community-known contacts, 17% at markets and general transportation, 6% at hospitals and/or primary care clinics, and 2.5% at education settings.

DISTRIBUTION OF COVID-19 CASES BY SEVERITY

- The total number of accumulative severe and critical cases increased in this reporting week when compared to the previous reporting week, indicating that infection is reaching more vulnerable groups at the community level.
- The total accumulative moderate cases increased to 90 on 30 November from 79 cases on 23 November. Severe cases increased to 95 from 81 and critical cases increased to 37 from 28.

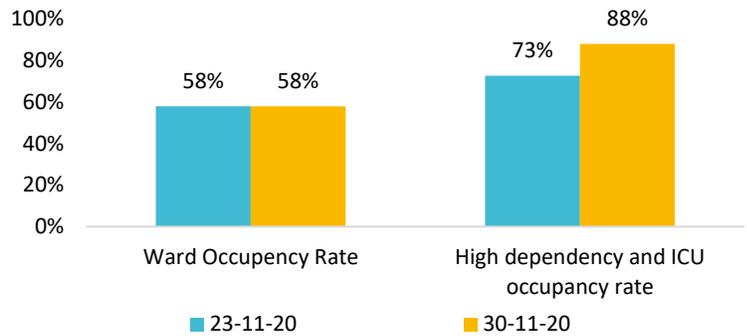
Accumulative reported COVID-19 cases distributed by severity



HEALTH SYSTEM CAPACITY (COVID-19 MANAGEMENT)

- According to MOH's latest update, 500 beds are assigned for COVID-19 patients at the Turkish hospital and European Gaza Hospital. 350 beds of these are for mild cases with co-morbidities and moderate cases, and 150 beds are for severe and critical cases.
- MOH started home isolation for mild COVID-19 cases who do not have any known co-morbidities since 14 November 2020. The ward occupancy rate did not change comparing between the reporting periods where it reached 58%.
- In contrary, the occupancy rate of high dependency and ICU beds (for severe and critical cases) increased to 88% from 73% between the two reporting periods, explained by the increase in the reported COVID-19 infections at community level where older age groups and other vulnerable groups are at higher risk of infection and developing severe complications.

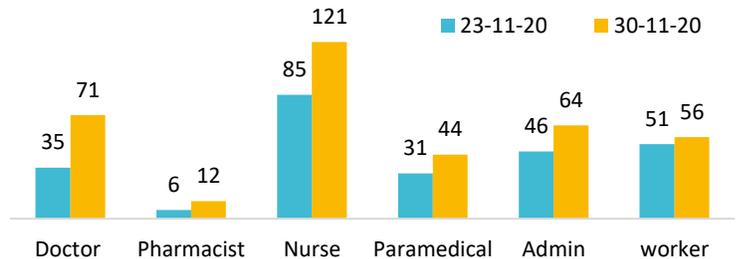
COVID19 beds occupancy rate by type of bed



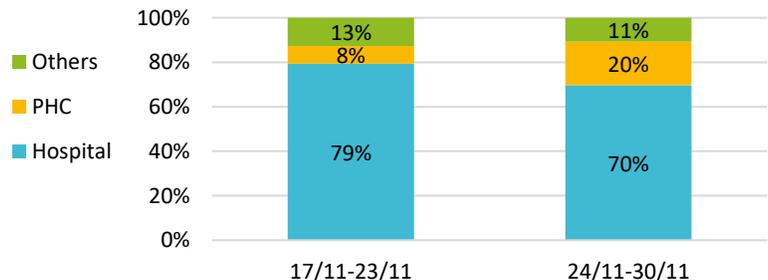
HEALTH CARE WORKERS INFECTIONS

- There is an increasing trend of health workforce testing positive for COVID-19 during November. The number of active cases increased among all health workforce categories when comparing between the two reporting periods as presented in the graph on the right.
- The increasing trends are reported among both male and female health workforce.
- Most of the reported COVID-19 infections among health workers were at hospital health settings, representing 70% between 24-30 November compared to 79% in the preceding week.
- There is an increase in percentage of health workforce infected with COVID-19 at primary health care settings to 20% between 24-30 November compared to 8% in the preceding week.
- The group "others" of the health facilities represents supporting services, administrative, and engineering departments.

Active COVID-19 cases among health workforce



Distribution of new reported COVID-19 cases among health workforce by facility



RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is an alarming increase in infections among older age groups indicating the urgent need for further measures to protect vulnerable populations and investigate the sources of infection. Unfortunately, this resulted in a sharp increase in reported COVID-19 deaths during the last two weeks.
- Increase in COVID-19 cases among school and university age groups among both males and females should be monitored closely and investigated whether the increase is related to contact at schools and/or universities.
- There is a change in the status of severity of COVID-19 infection among younger age groups. As a result, more deaths are reported from the age group >30-50. One death was reported among the age group >12-19. This situation should be closely monitored.
- There is an increasing trend in reported COVID-19 infections among health workforce, especially at hospital settings. Further efforts of implementing and monitoring Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) measures at all health care settings are urgently needed.
- The occupancy rate at high dependency and ICU units reached 88% which is the highest occupancy rate since the beginning of community transmission of COVID-19. Urgent interventions to decrease community transmission and/or increasing MOH response capacity is essential at this stage.
- Shortage of oxygen still a critical problem particularly at the dedicated treatment hospital for COVID-19 patients (EGH) in Gaza. Further support is essential to maintain adequate oxygen supply for admitted patients.
- **The previous report and this report reached similar alarming trends of increase in total cases, increase in the severity of cases and also higher utilization of existing MOH capacity. Thus, urgent and stricter social procedures and community awareness initiatives are highly recommended to avoid further deterioration of the situation and potential breakdown of the health care system in Gaza.**