



Weekly surveillance report: COVID-19 in Vanuatu

Prepared by the National Surveillance, Research & Emergency Response Unit

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Report date: 16 March, 2022

Reporting period: Until end of EpiWeek 10 (13 March 2022)

Next report: Before 23 March, 2022

Summary

- By the end of Epidemiological Week (EpiWeek) 10, there were a total of 306 cases of COVID-19 detected in Vanuatu, 21 of which were border cases and 285 were locally-acquired. The first locally-acquired case was detected in EpiWeek 9. In EpiWeek 10, all cases notified were locally-acquired
- Among cases detected in 2022, males comprise a greater proportion in both Shefa and Sanma provinces (56% males compared with 44% females)
- The notification rate for all age groups in Shefa increased between EpiWeek 8 and EpiWeek 11
- People aged 18-34 years and 35-54 years have the highest notification rates; this may be due to these age groups being more mobile in the community (such as through essential work or not complying with stay-at-home orders) and also ease of access to health services for these age groups
- It is likely that the notification rates for younger and older age groups will start to increase as they are exposed via family members in the age groups with the highest notification rates and as testing sites are decentralized
- 66% of cases are currently under investigation to determine if they have symptoms; among the 28% of cases reporting symptoms, the most common symptoms reported include cough (61%), fever (56%) and headache (49%)
- Over 40% of cases in both Shefa and Sanma provinces are fully vaccinated; this is due to the increasing rate of vaccination in the adult population (currently 53%) and that fully-vaccinated people are more likely to leave their house during current restrictions than unvaccinated people (for example, to go shopping or to do essential work), and therefore are more likely to be exposed. It is also possible that those who come forward for vaccination are also the same group of people who come forward for testing
- The proportion of cases detected via rapid antigen testing is increasing, and will continue to increase as distribution of kits across Vanuatu increases
- Community testing in health centres in around Efate and in other provinces has not been reported to date and is therefore not reflected in this report, however community testing is an important tool to estimate spread and is recommended to be included in future reports
- The majority (53%) of tests are being conducted at the VCH testing clinic however positivity is higher in private clinics (16%) compared to the VCH testing clinic (12%).

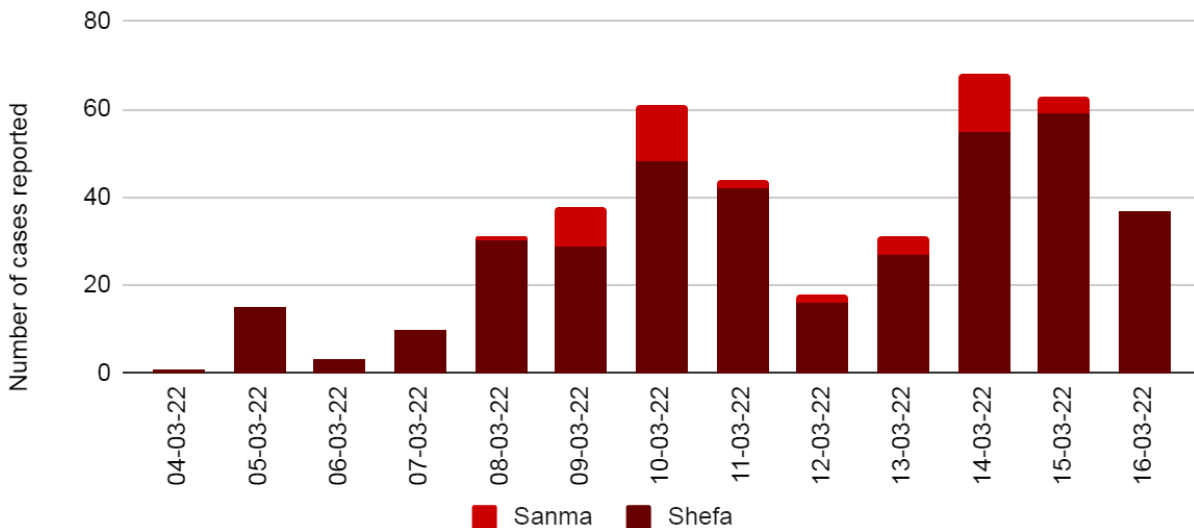
Section 1. Number of people diagnosed with COVID-19

Table 1. Number of confirmed cases by province and current status, 2022

		Number of cases of COVID-19					
		National		Shefa		Sanma	
		EW10	Until end EW10	EW10	Until end EW10	EW10	Until end EW10
Confirmed		243	306	211	274	32	32
		Current status of confirmed cases recorded in national database					
		National		Shefa		Shefa	
		EW10	Current at end of EW10	EW10	Current at end of EW10	EW10	Current at end of EW10
Active		222	244	191	213	31	31
		EW10	2022 total	EW10	Until end EW10	EW10	Until end EW10
Recovered		20	61	20	61	0	0
Deceased		0	0	0	0	0	0

Note: An epidemiological week is a standardised method of counting weeks to allow for the comparison of data year after year. Note that counts may be different to that reported in the Situation Report due to different reporting periods.

Figure 1. Number of new reported locally-acquired cases of COVID-19 in Vanuatu, by date of report and province, Vanuatu, since 1 March 2022



Note: The number of reported cases is less than the true number of cases in the community; reasons include some being asymptomatic, the current testing strategy focusing on symptomatic people and difficulties in access to testing. The true number of cases is expected to be at least 3-5 times the number of confirmed and reported cases.

Figure 2. Proportion of reported cases by gender and province among all reported cases, 2022

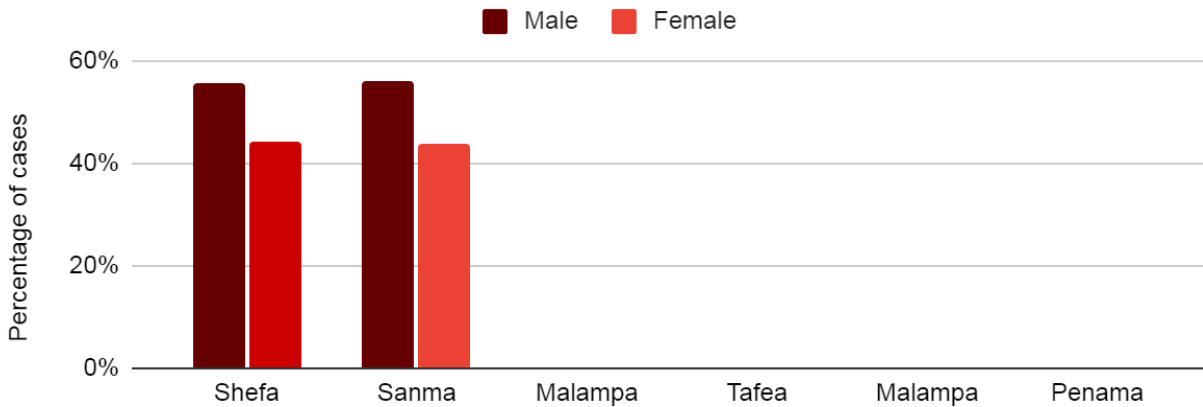


Figure 3. Age group of locally-acquired cases of COVID-19 in Vanuatu by province of detection, 2022

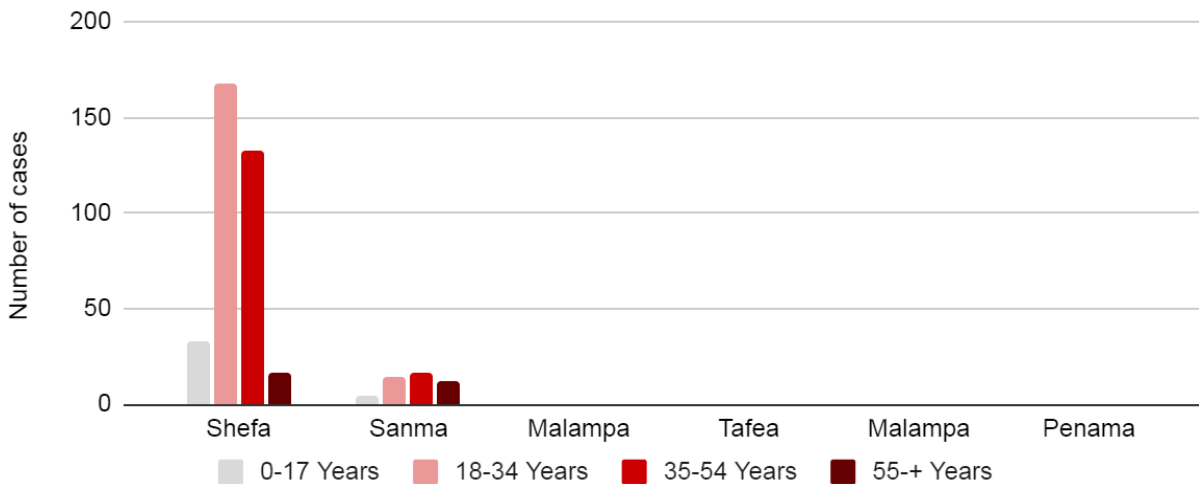
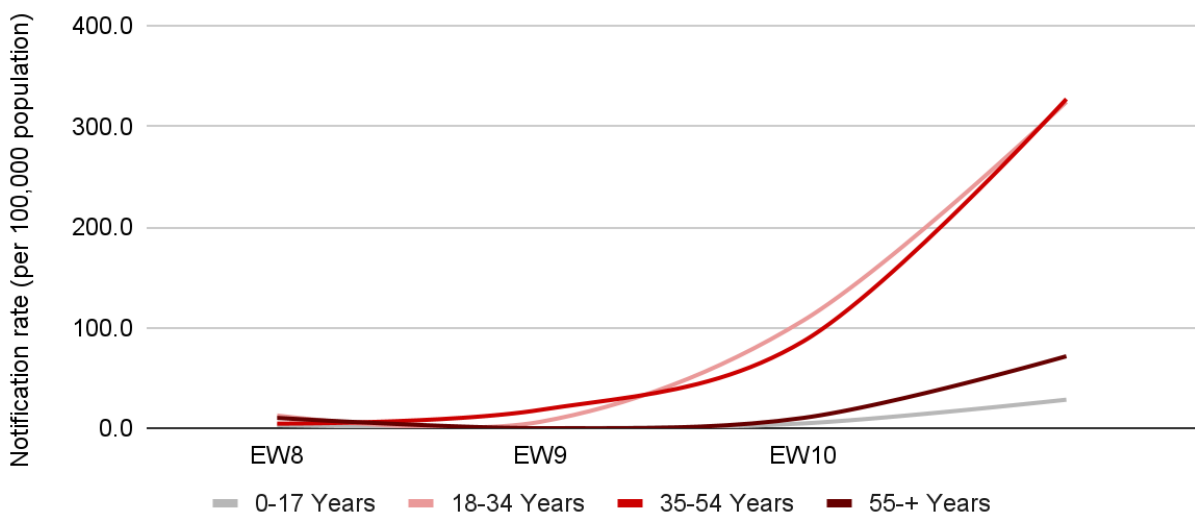


Figure 4. Notification rate of locally-acquired cases of COVID-19 in Vanuatu by age group and EpiWeek of notification in Shefa Province, 2022



Note: Notification rates by age group for other provinces will be presented as data becomes available.

Figure 5. Symptoms among locally-acquired cases of COVID-19 in Vanuatu, 2022

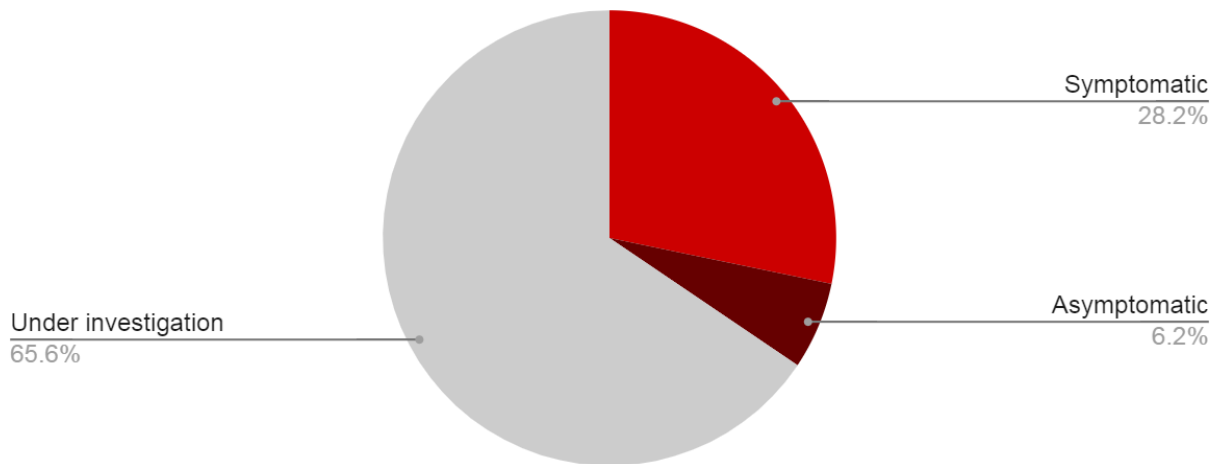
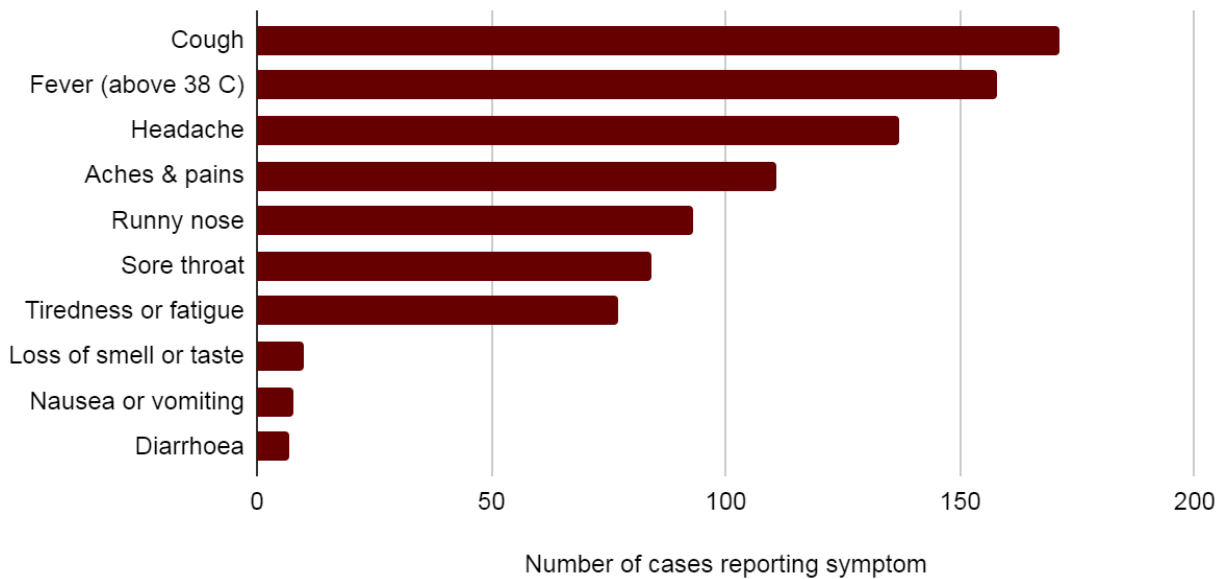


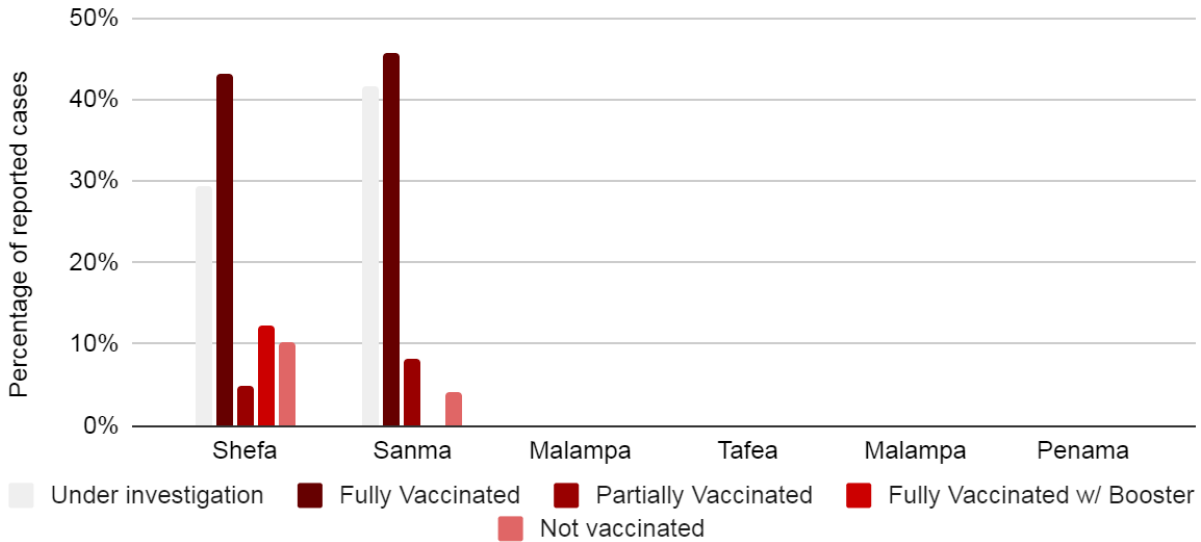
Figure 6. Top five-most commonly reported symptoms among locally-acquired cases of COVID-19 in Vanuatu, 2022



Note: Cases may report more than one symptom



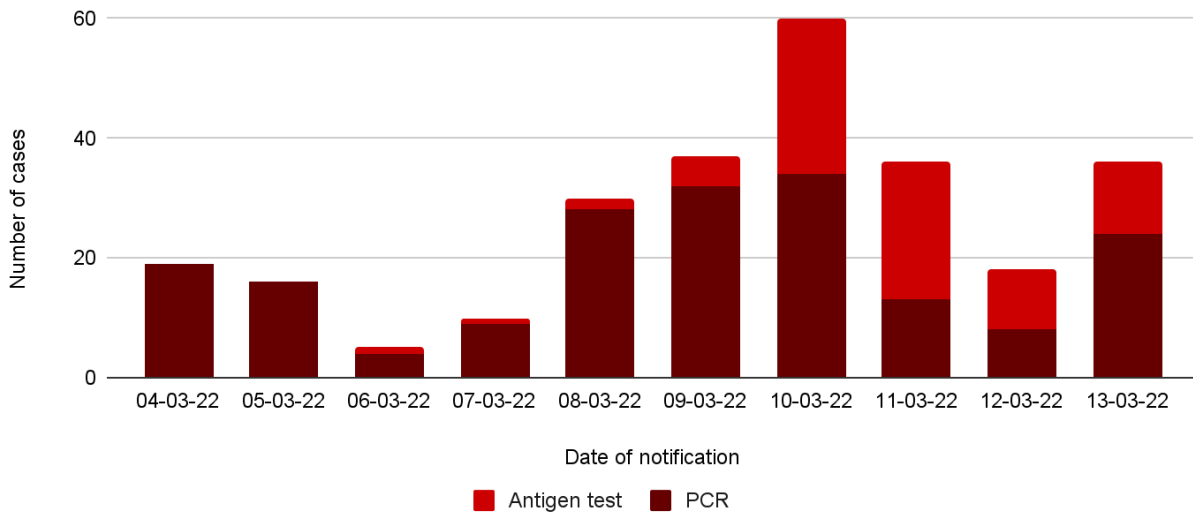
Figure 7. Vaccination status among locally-acquired cases of COVID-19 in Vanuatu by province, 2022



Note: The high rate of vaccination among cases is expected and in-line with current vaccination coverage in Vanuatu. COVID-19 vaccination is not as effective as preventing Omicron infection compared to other variants however COVID-19 vaccines are very effective in preventing severe disease and death. The impact of vaccination on preventing severe disease and deaths will be seen over the next few weeks. More than 50 per cent of people aged 18 and over in Vanuatu have received two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine. With more than half the adult population fully vaccinated, a greater proportion of people admitted to hospital or requiring critical care are now vaccinated with two or three doses. However, when the size of the vaccinated and unvaccinated populations in Vanuatu are considered, people who are not vaccinated remain far more likely to suffer severe COVID-19.

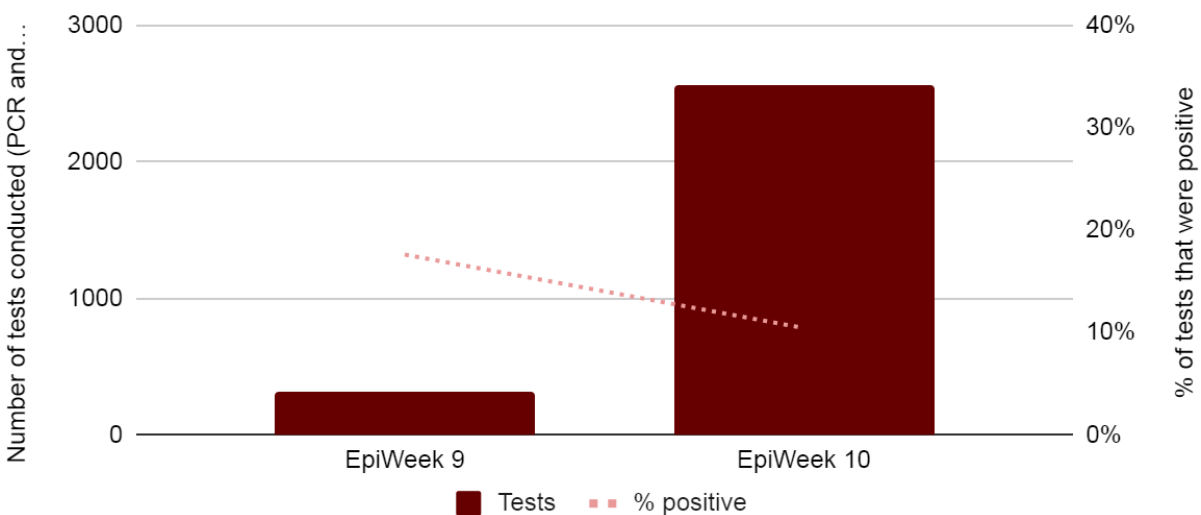
Section 2. Testing and positivity

Figure 8. Number of people diagnosed with COVID-19 in Vanuatu, by date of test and type of test performed, Vanuatu, 2022



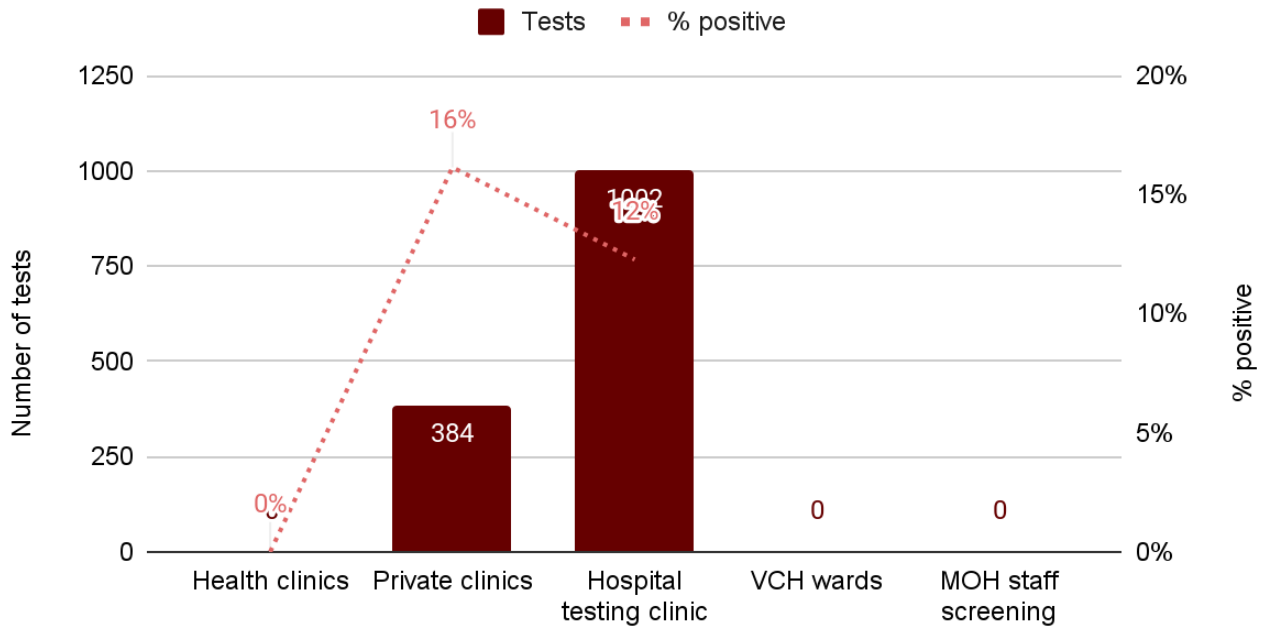
Note: Rapid antigen testing became available in private clinics and health clinics from March 7, 2022

Figure 9. Total number of tests and test positivity by EpiWeek in Vanuatu, 2022



Note: The high positivity in EpiWeek 9 is due to the high positivity rate among returning travelers and front line workers in quarantine and repeated testing among previously confirmed cases. Individuals may be counted more than once in the data above.

Figure 10. Total number of tests and test positivity by service type, Vanuatu, 2022



Section 3. Hospitalisations

Data is still being collated and information on hospitalisations will be provided in next week's report.

Acknowledgements

The Ministry of Health Surveillance and Response Unit thanks all medical officers and laboratory officers for reporting and providing data for this report. Thank you to private doctors who are also providing testing and providing data to the Ministry of Health. Thank you to all of the surge support staff and partners who are supporting the Surveillance and Response Unit in case investigation and contact tracing.