

COVID-19 CASES IN THE GAZA STRIP

Monthly epidemiological bulletin from (12/05 TO 10/06 2021) AND (11/06 TO 10/07 2021)

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

GENERAL

Reporting Period	Weekly cases (Biweekly for this report)		Cumulative
	12/05/2021 10/06/2021	11/06/2021 10/07/2021	accumulative since 23/8/2020
# of samples tested	total 23,114	22,045	609,419
# of positive cases	total 6,043	3,531	115,201
# of closed cases	total 10,8476	11,4762	
# recovered cases (%closed)	107,439 (99.05%)	113,687 (99.06%)	
# reported deaths (%closed)	1,037 (0.95%)	1,075 (0.94%)	
Classification of positive cases by severity*	Mild	5,952	3,453
	Moderate	35	32
	Severe	42	34
	Critical	14	12
Positivity rates (weekly)	total	26%	18.9%
	contacts	26%	24%
	suspect	26%	14%
	surveillance	3%	2%

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

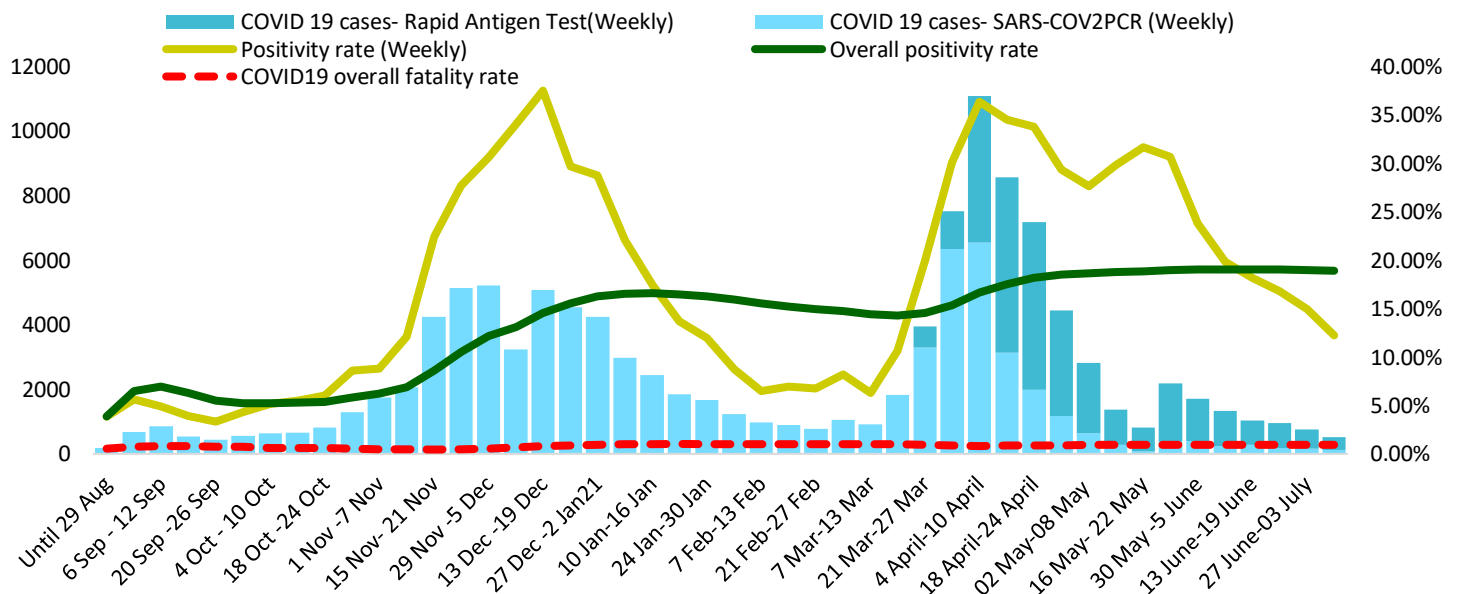


Figure 1: Reported weekly COVID-19 cases, weekly positivity rates, overall positivity rates and overall fatality rate

- This report compares two months: from 12 May to 10 June 2021 with 11 June to 10 July 2021.
- Ministry of Health (MOH) ceased random testing in areas with high previous infection rates or vaccination coverage.
- Decrease in total number of conducted tests (both COVID-19 Antigen Rapid test and SARS-COV2-PCR test) to 22,045 between 11 June-10 July from 23,114 between 12 May-10 June 2021.
- Decrease in number of newly reported COVID-19 cases to 3,531 between 11 June-10 July from 6,043 between 12 May-10 June 2021
- Decrease in newly reported COVID-19 cases and incidence per 100,000 population in all five Gaza districts (Figures 2 and 3).

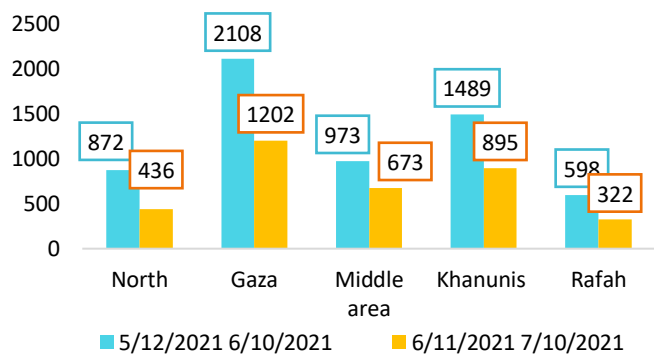


Figure 2: Newly reported weekly COVID-19 cases in Gaza Strip districts

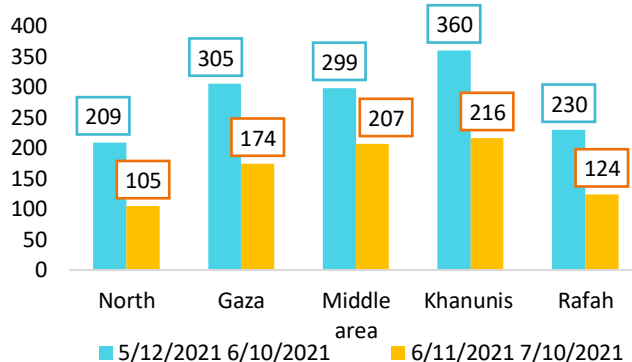


Figure 3: Incidence of weekly COVID-19 reported cases per 100,000 population in Gaza Strip districts

- Last MOH map with traffic light system (TLS) from 23 May 2021 shows only 10 neighbourhoods classified as red. TLS distributes the ratio of newly detected COVID-19 cases using 7 days average, classifying neighbourhoods by color (Red, Yellow, Green) with red representing highest ratio.
- Due to the low number of random tests conducted, TLS is currently rendered unreliable in outbreak follow up.

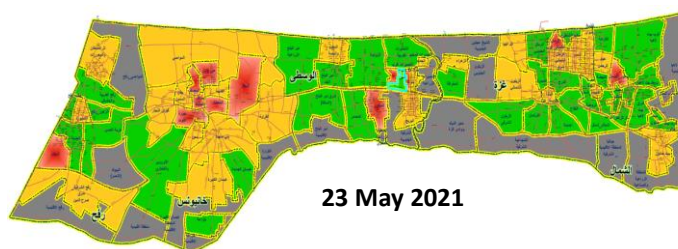


Figure 4: Geographical distribution of newly reported COVID-19 cases (7 days average) in Gaza Strip neighborhoods

POSITIVITY RATES

- Decrease in positivity rate to 16% between 11 June-10 July from 26% between 12 May-10 June 2021 (Figure 1).
- Decrease in positivity rate among all five Gaza districts (Figure 5).
- Decrease in positivity rate among contacts and suspected cases (Table on page 1).
- Overall positivity rate 18.9% up to 10 July compared to 19.0% on 6 June 2021 (Table on page 1).

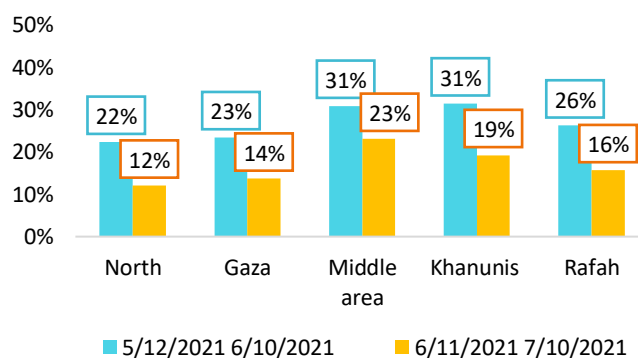


Figure 5: COVID19 weekly positivity rates distributed by districts

DISTRIBUTION OF COVID-19 CASES AMONG AGE GROUPS AND GENDER

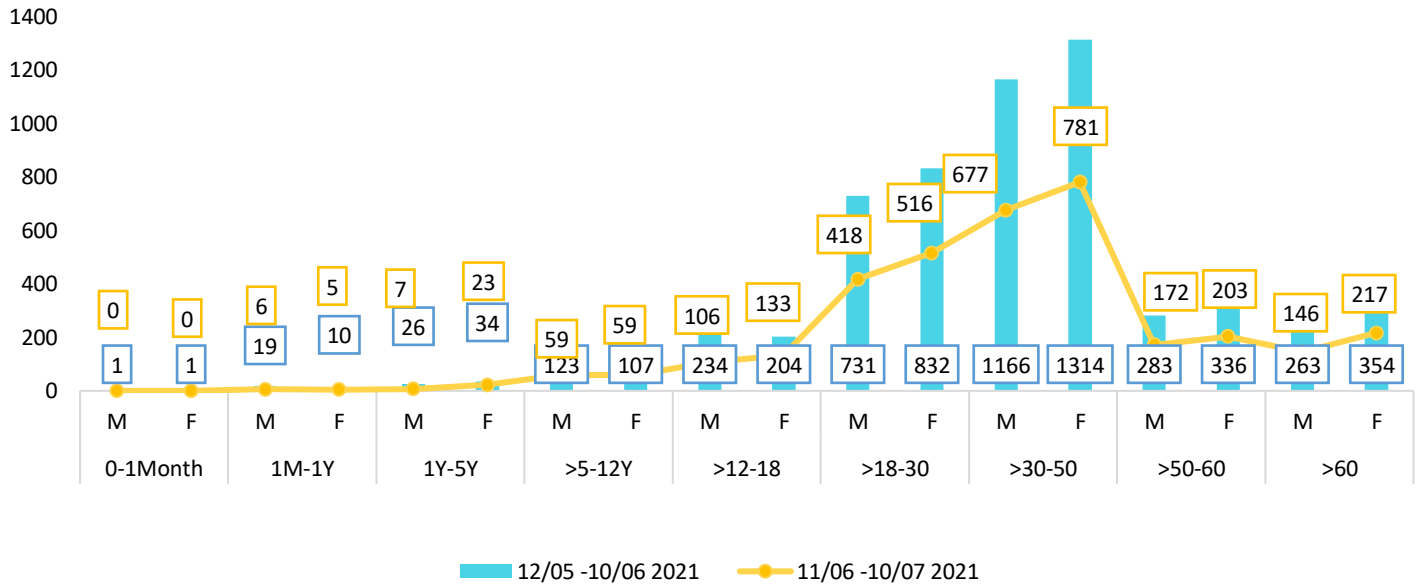


Figure 6: Weekly newly reported COVID-19 cases distributed by age groups and gender

- Decrease in newly reported COVID-19 cases among all age groups between the two reporting periods.
- Highest reported COVID-19 cases in the two reporting periods among people aged 18 to 50.

DISTRIBUTION OF COVID-19 DEATHS

- Decrease in number of reported COVID-19 deaths to 38 between 11 June-10 July from 64 between 12 May-10 June 2021.
- Majority of reported COVID-19 deaths among people aged 60 years and older. 20 male and 18 female deaths were reported between 11 June-10 July compared to 33 male and 31 female deaths between 12 May-10 June 2021 (Figure 7).
- Total 1,075 reported deaths since the start of COVID-19 outbreak in the Gaza Strip until 10 July with an accumulative COVID-19 fatality rate of 1%. Out of the 1,075 COVID-19 reported deaths, 634 were males (59%) and 441 were females (41%).

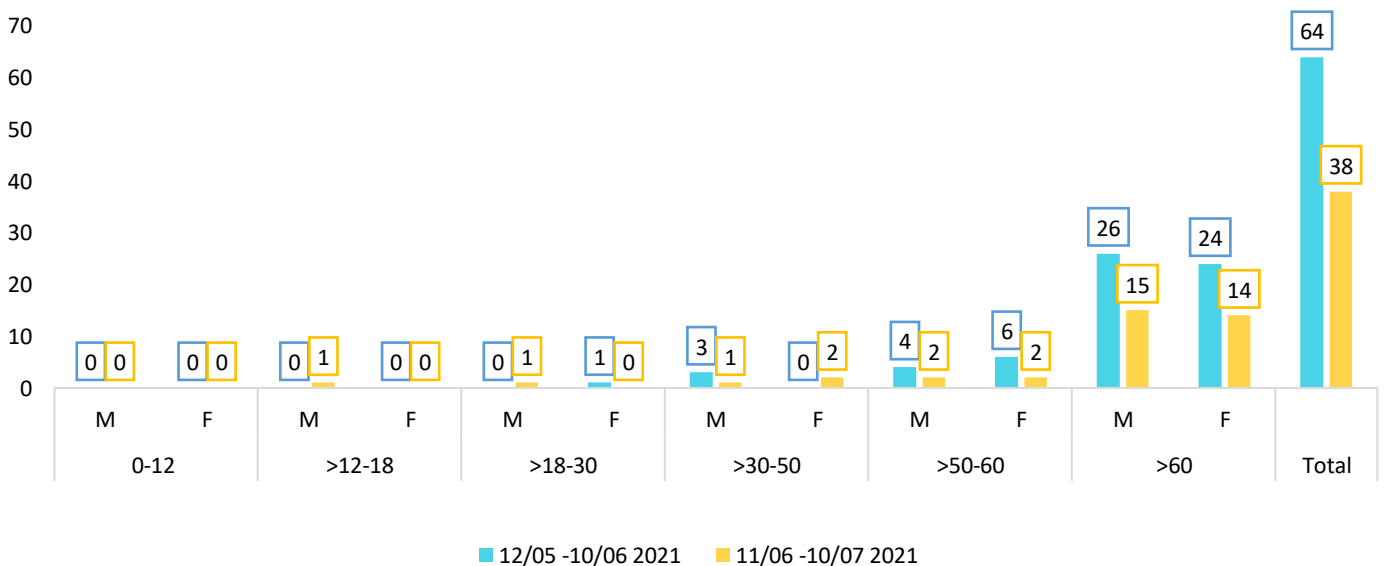


Figure 7: Distribution of reported COVID-19 deaths by age groups and gender

DISTRIBUTION OF COVID-19 CASES BY SEVERITY

- Decrease in cumulative moderate cases admitted to hospitals to 13 on 10 July from 16 cases on 10 June 2021 (Figure 8).
- Decrease in cumulative severe cases admitted to hospitals to 26 on 10 July compared to 42 cases on 10 June 2021 (Figure 8).
- Decrease in cumulative critical cases admitted to hospitals to 3 on 10 July compared to 9 cases on 10 June 2021.
- Decrease in total number of admitted cases to COVID-19 departments to 42 on 10 July from 67 cases on 10 June 2021.

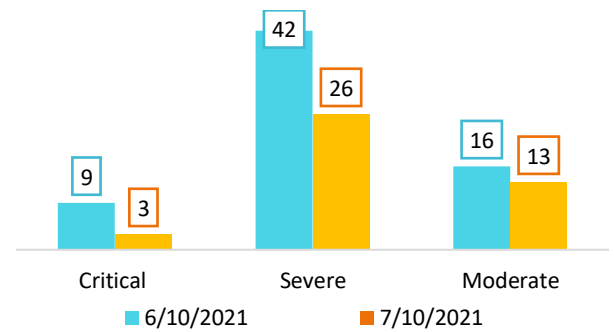


Figure 8: Classification of cumulative hospital admitted COVID-19 patients by severity

HEALTH SYSTEM CAPACITY (COVID-19 MANAGEMENT)

- Decrease in COVID-19 bed occupancy rate to 26% on 10 July from 38% on 10 June 2021 (Figure 9) over a total number of 180 available COVID-19 beds, including 70 high dependency and 30 ICU beds in governmental hospitals.
- Decrease in high dependency and ICU occupancy rate to 41% on 10 July from 73% on 10 June 2021 (Figure 9).

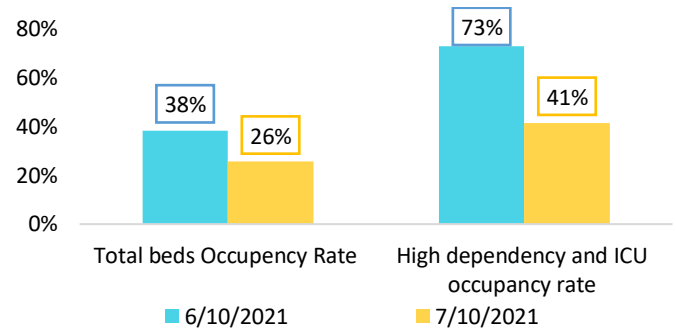


Figure 9: Occupancy rates of COVID-19 beds classified by type of bed

HEALTH CARE WORKERS INFECTIONS

- Decrease in total number of active COVID-19 cases among health workers to 27 on 10 July from 68 on 10 June 2021. Figure 10 presents the distribution of new cases by sex and profession of health workers.
- Decrease in newly reported COVID-19 infection among health workforce to 68 between 12 May-10 June from 145 between 11 June-10 July 2021 (Figure 10).
- Around 59% of newly reported infected health workers were working in hospital settings where most tests were conducted (Figure 11).

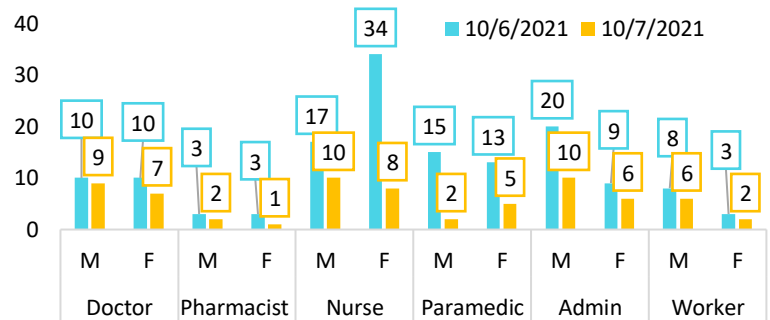


Figure 10: Active reported COVID-19 cases among health workforce distributed by gender and profession

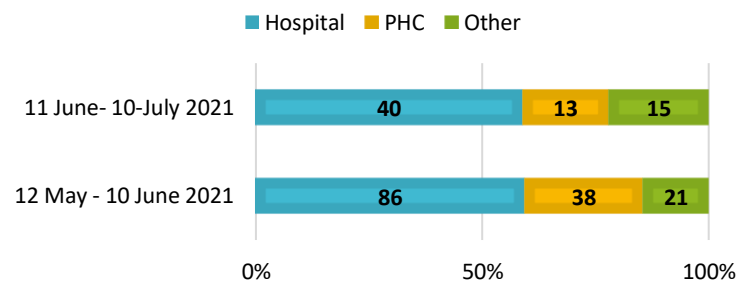


Figure 11: Distribution of newly weekly reported COVID-19 cases among health workforce by work setting

COVID-19 VACCINATION

- Up to date, a total of 226,300 doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been received in Gaza according to MOH.
- National vaccination campaign was launched in Gaza Strip on 22 February 2021 in parallel with established specific vaccine distribution criteria for elders with chronic health conditions, frontline health care workers and other patients with life-threatening health conditions.
- MOH concentrated efforts reached most target groups through vaccination campaigns. Several awareness campaigns were conducted through media and community outreach in mosques and workplaces. Specific vaccination campaigns were conducted for UN employees and their relatives.
- Up to 10 July, 88,536 frontline health workers and community members received the first dose of COVID-19 vaccine at MOH hospitals, PHC clinics and UNRWA clinics, representing an 182% increase compared to 10 June 2021. 48,442 people received their second vaccination dose, representing an 132% increase. The rapid increase in number of vaccinated people is attributed to the type of vaccine available, with less vaccine hesitancy issues.
- COVID-19 vaccination coverage for fully vaccinated people is 4.3% and for people with one dose 2.4% as of 10 July 2021.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Significant decrease in all COVID-19 related statistics since early June, including occupancy rate and fatality rate.
- Significant decrease in number of samples received at MOH COVID-19 PCR laboratory since the start of the latest Gaza escalation of hostilities, which continued after the ceasefire on 21 May 2021, despite the rapid repairs of the damaged PCR laboratory.
- Reluctance among population to get tested in spite of symptoms due to complacency and wrong perception that the pandemic is under control.
- Low awareness of continued risk of infection and poor adherence to public health measures among wider population needs to be urgently addressed.
- Very low vaccination coverage and unknown duration of acquired immunity by earlier infection provide limited protection to potential arrival of more transmissible variant, as restrictions on people's movements in and out of Gaza have been eased.
- MOH does not have laboratory capacity to test for new strains, hence epidemiological surveillance is crucial to rapidly detect changes in trends.
- Random testing among population should be urgently resumed throughout the entire Gaza Strip to facilitate early detection of community transmission.
- In view of limited availability of vaccines, vaccine management should be improved to avoid wastage and expiry of vaccines.
- MOH's preparedness efforts for a potential third wave should include prepositioning of medical supplies, drugs, and oxygen, stand-by rosters of well-trained human resources, as well as the rapid reinstatement of restrictions on mass gatherings.
- Strengthening of RCCE efforts to address poor adherence to public health measures and vaccine hesitancy among the Gaza population, should focus on the persistent threat of COVID-19 due to low vaccine coverage, unknown duration of acquired immunity, the possibility of re-infection, and the potential arrival of a more infectious variant.