

COVID-19 CASES IN THE GAZA STRIP

Weekly epidemiological bulletin from (11/04 TO 17/04 2021) AND (18/04 TO 24/04 2021)

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

GENERAL

Reporting Period	Weekly cases		Cumulative
	11-04-2021 17-04-2021	18-04-2021 24-04-2021	accumulative since 23/8/2020
# of samples tested	total 24,812	21,251	535,243
# of positive cases	total 8,565	7,170	97,258
# of closed cases	total 69,149	80,947	
# recovered cases (%closed)	68,388 (98.8%)	80,099 (99%)	
# reported deaths (%closed)	761 (1.1%)	848 (1%)	
Classification of positive cases by severity*	Mild	8,454	7,084
	Moderate	51	24
	Severe	40	41
	Critical	20	21
Positivity rates (weekly)	total	34.52%	18.2%
	contacts	47.0%	44.5%
	suspect	43.1%	28.5%
	surveillance	0.7%	4.3%

* 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.

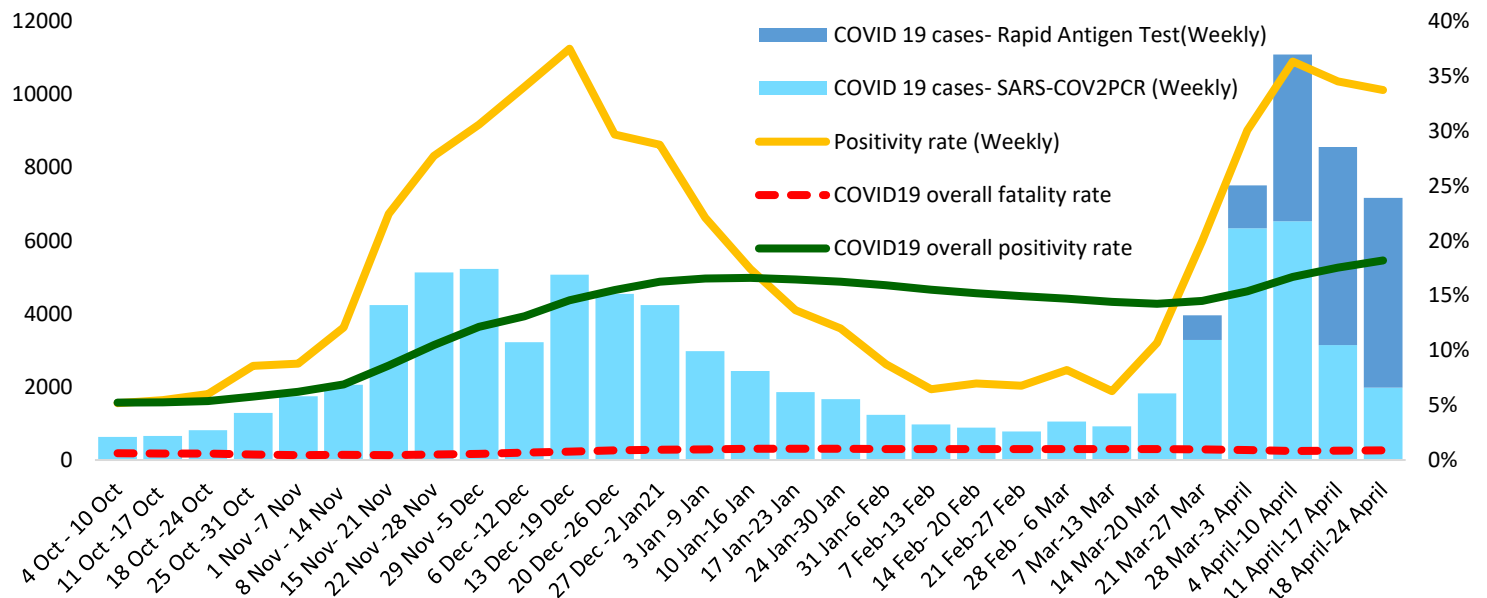


Figure 1: Reported weekly COVID-19 cases, weekly positivity rates, overall positivity rates and overall fatality rate

- Decrease in total number of conducted tests (both COVID-19 Antigen Rapid test and SARS-COV2-PCR test) to 21,251 between 18-24 April from 24,812 between 11-17 April 2021.
- Decrease in number of newly reported COVID-19 cases to 7,170 between 18-24 April from 8,565 between 11-17 April 2021.
- Decrease in newly reported COVID-19 cases and incidence per 100,000 along all five Gaza Strip districts.
- Decrease in newly reported cases may be related to new Ministry of Health (MOH) testing criteria prioritising high-risk groups, elderly, and suspected cases.

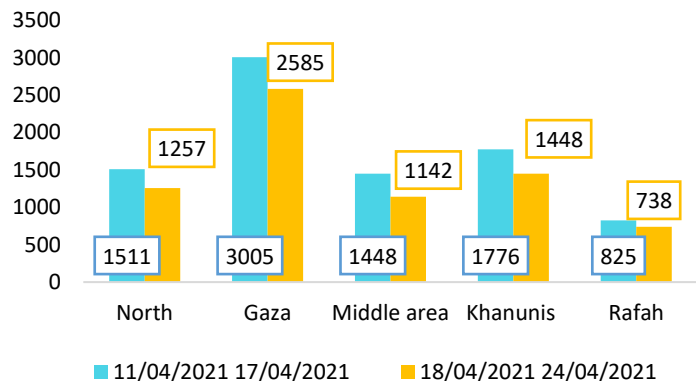


Figure 2: Newly reported weekly COVID-19 cases in Gaza Strip districts

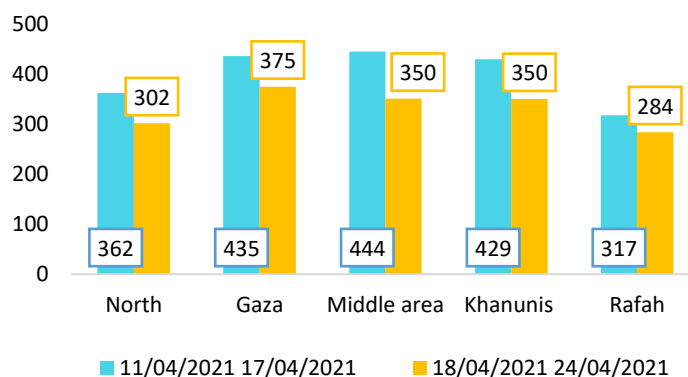
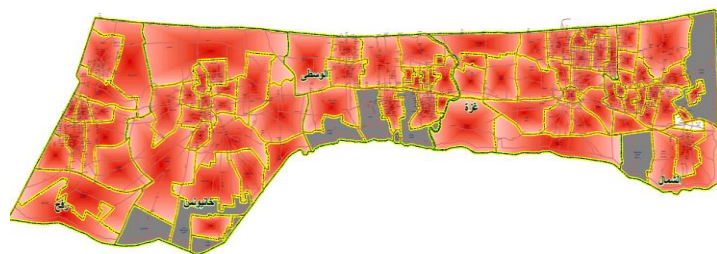


Figure 3: Incidence of weekly COVID-19 reported cases per 100,000 population in Gaza Strip districts

- All Gaza Strip areas remain red on 24 April similar to 16 April 2021 (Figure 4). The red areas represent high risk neighbourhoods based on a traffic light system (TLS) developed by PNIPH/WHO which distributes the ratio of newly detected COVID-19 cases (7 days average). This system classifies the neighbourhoods by colour (Red, Yellow, Green).



16 April 2021



24 April 2021

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

POSITIVITY RATES

- Decrease in weekly COVID-19 positivity rate to 33.74% between 18-24 April from 34.52% between 11-17 April 2021.
- Slight decrease in weekly positivity rates in North, Gaza and Middle districts, with a slight increase in Khanunis and Rafah districts comparing between last two weeks (Figure 5).
- Decrease in weekly positivity rates among suspected cases and contacts, with increase among random surveillance comparing between the two weeks (Table on page 1).
- Increase in overall positivity rate up to 24 April 2021 to 18.2% (Table on page 1).

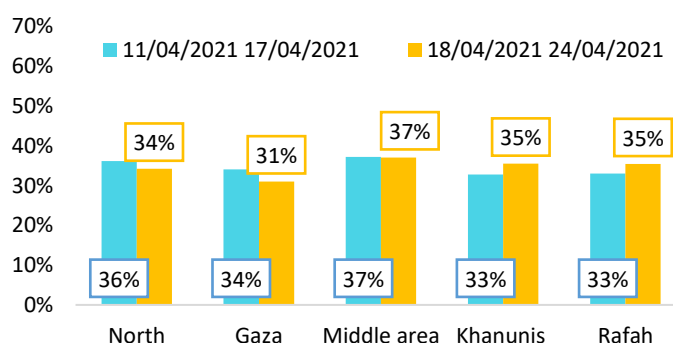


Figure 5: COVID-19 weekly positivity rates distributed by districts

DISTRIBUTION OF COVID-19 CASES AMONG AGE GROUPS AND GENDER

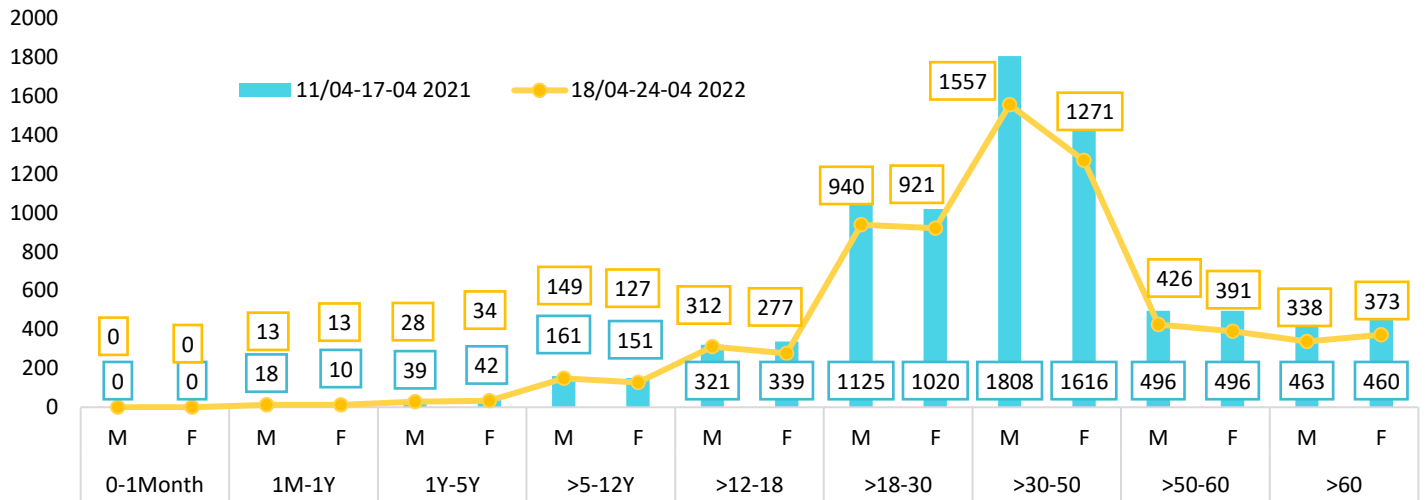


Figure 6: Weekly newly reported COVID-19 cases distributed by age groups and gender

- Decrease among all age groups between 18-24 April 2021 compared to 11-17 April 2021.
- Highest reported COVID-19 cases among people aged 18 to 50 among males and females in the two reporting periods.

DISTRIBUTION OF COVID-19 DEATHS

- Increase in number of COVID-19 deaths to 87 (56 males, 31 females) between 18-24 April 2021 from 84 deaths between 11-17 April 2021 (Figure 7). This is the highest number of weekly reported deaths since the beginning of COVID-19 community transmission in Gaza Strip.
- Majority of COVID-19 deaths are from people aged 60 years and older (Figure 7). 48 male and 30 female deaths were reported between 18-24 April compared to 52 male deaths and 20 female deaths between 11-17 April 2021 (Figure 7).
- Four deaths among younger age groups (>30-50) between 18-24 April compared to 5 deaths between 11-17 April 2021.
- Total reported deaths since the start of COVID-19 outbreak in the Gaza Strip until 24 April reached 848 with an accumulative COVID-19 fatality rate of 1.1%. Out of the 848 COVID-19 reported deaths, 507 were males (60%) and 341 were females (40%).

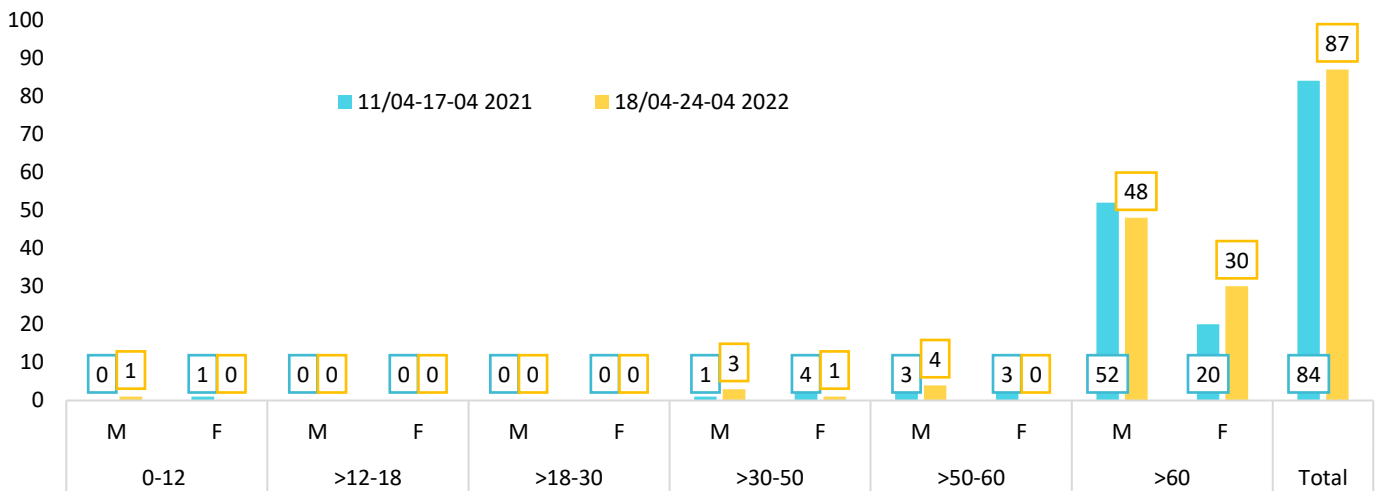


Figure 7: Distribution of reported COVID-19 deaths by age groups and gender

DISTRIBUTION OF COVID-19 CASES BY SEVERITY

- Decrease in cumulative moderate cases admitted to hospitals to 82 on 24 April compared to 87 cases on 17 April 2021 (Figure 8).
- Decrease in cumulative severe cases admitted to hospitals to 221 on 24 April compared to 242 cases on 17 April 2021 (Figure 8).
- Increase in cumulative critical cases admitted to hospitals to 64 cases on 24 April compared to 63 cases on 17 April 2021.

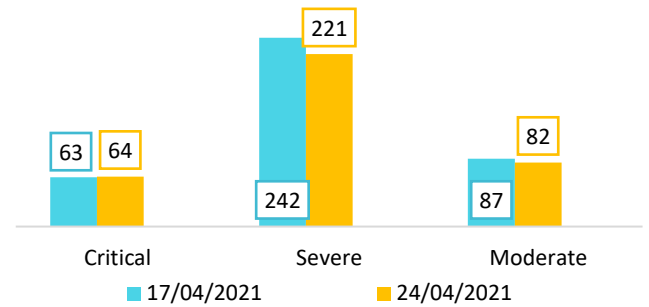


Figure 8: Classification of cumulative hospital admitted COVID-19 patients by severity

HEALTH SYSTEM CAPACITY (COVID-19 MANAGEMENT)

- Decrease in total COVID-19 bed occupancy rates to 66% on 24 April from 72% on 17 April 2021, based on 627 COVID-19 beds, including 381 high dependency and 86 ICU beds as of 18 April 2021 (Figure 9).
- Decrease in occupancy rate at high dependency and ICU units to 74% on 24 April from 79% on 17 April 2021 (Figure 9).

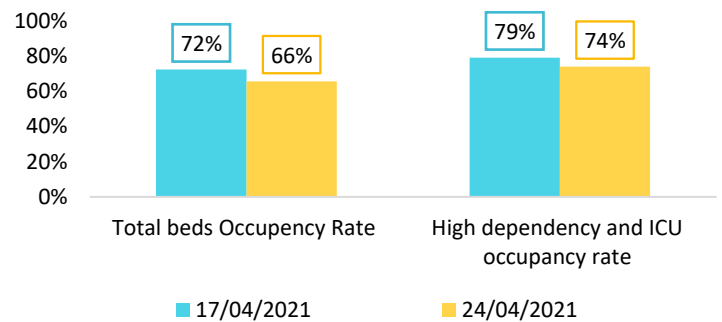


Figure 9: Occupancy rates of COVID-19 beds classified by type of bed

HEALTH CARE WORKERS INFECTIONS

- Decrease in total number of active COVID-19 cases among health workers to 289 on 24 April from 437 on 17 April 2021. Figure 10 presents the distribution of cases by sex and profession of health workers.
- Decrease in newly reported COVID-19 infections among health workforce to 130 between 18-24 April from 159 between 11-17 April 2021 (Figure 11).
- Around 50% of the newly reported infected health workers were working at hospital setting between 18-24 April 2021 (Figure 11).

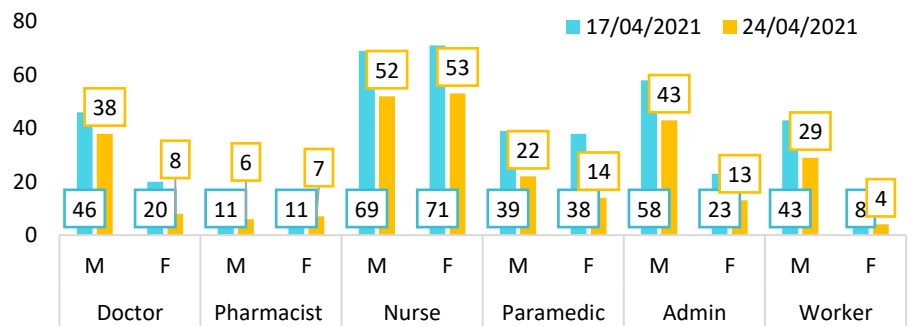


Figure 10: Active reported COVID-19 cases among health workforce distributed by gender and profession

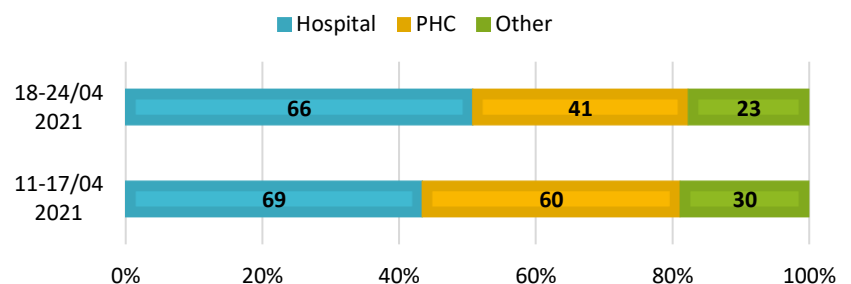


Figure 11: Distribution of newly weekly reported COVID-19 cases among health workforce by work setting

COVID-19 VACCINATION

- 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.

Table 2: Delivered COVID-19 vaccine doses Gaza Strip (24 April 2021)

No	Date	Vaccine route	Delivered vaccine doses
1	February 2021	Palestinian Authority	2,000
2	February 2021	Donations from UAE	20,000
3	11 March 2021	Donations from UAE	38,700
4	21 March 2021	COVAX	21,300
5	19 April 2021	COVAX	28,800
		Total	110,800

- Up to 24 April 2021, 35,501 frontline health workers and community members received the first dose of COVID-19 vaccinations MOH hospitals, PHC clinics and UNRWA clinics, with 22,547 receiving their second dose of vaccine.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Decrease in newly reported COVID-19 cases and weekly positivity rates among both males and females and all age groups along five Gaza Strip districts. Almost all areas are coded red reflecting the wide range of COVID-19 community transmission at this stage.
- Alarming increase in reported COVID-19 deaths and admitted COVID-19 patients in critical conditions. Protection of the most vulnerable COVID-19 patients such as elderly and patients with known co-morbidities remains vital. The process of early hospital admission for these groups should be enforced to provide early supportive care to prevent the deterioration of their health conditions and late access to lifesaving care.
- Supporting health care system for proper management of COVID-19 patients and all patients is essential to prevent further deterioration. In response to the alarming increase in high dependency and ICU bed occupancy rates, MOH increased COVID-19 beds capacity which is very critical at this stage to provide appropriate care for COVID-19 patients.
- During Ramadan, Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) messaging on public health measures among the broader population need to be urgently stepped up to prevent further deterioration in COVID-19 figures specially where people gather more frequently than other seasons during the year. WHO produced the Safe Ramadan Practices Guide: English: <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331767/WHO-2019-nCoV-Ramadan-2020.1-eng.pdf>
- Strengthening of RCCE efforts to address vaccine hesitancy among the population and raise awareness of the urgency to get vaccinated including for those previously infected by COVID-19 in view of the unknown duration of immunity and the risk of re-infection.