

COVID-19 CASES IN THE GAZA STRIP

Weekly epidemiological bulletin from (24/01 TO 30/01 2021) AND (31/01 TO 06/02)

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

GENERAL

Reporting Period	Weekly cases		Cumulative
	24-01-21 30-01-21	31-01-21 06-02-21	accumulative since 23/8/2020
# of samples tested	total 13,922	14,105	330,156
# of positive cases	total 1,668	1,231	52,543
# of closed cases	total 46,827	48,655	
# recovered cases (%closed)	46,305 (99%)	48,126 (99%)	
# reported deaths (%closed)	522 (1%)	529 (1%)	
Classification of positive cases by severity*	mild	1,647	1,209
	moderate	12	4
	severe	6	12
	critical	3	6
Positivity rates	total	11.98%	15.9%
	contacts	27.2%	19.2%
	suspect	21.5%	21.1%
	surveillance	4.8%	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.

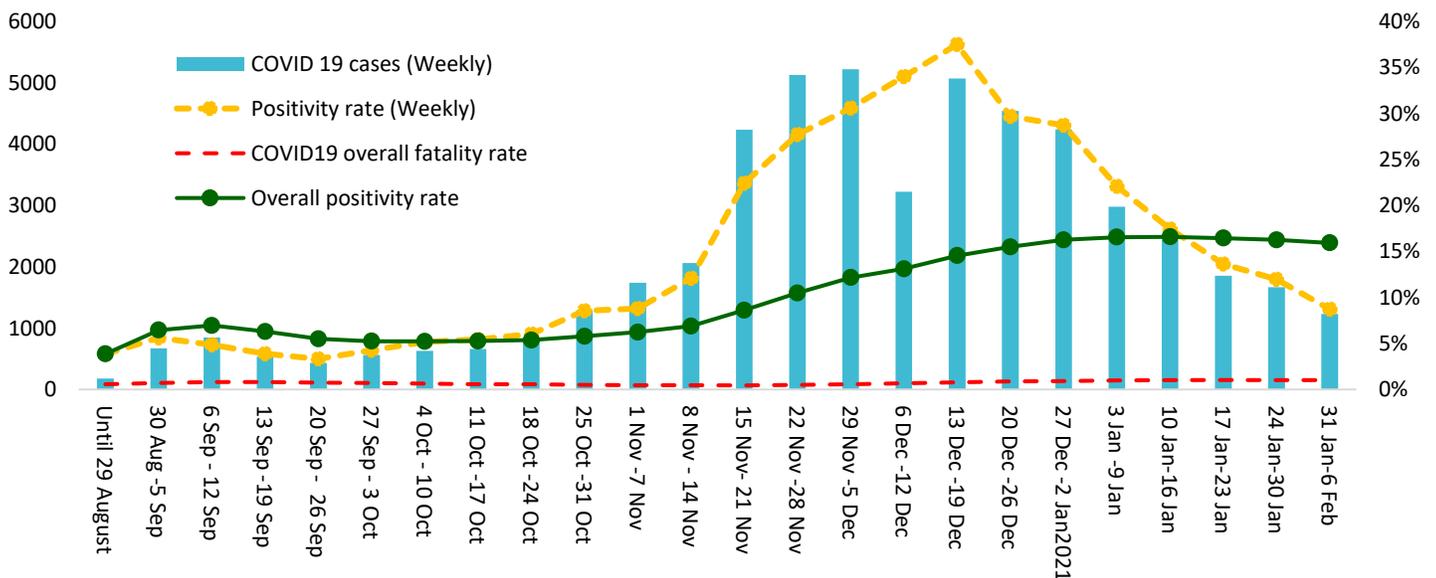


Figure 1: Reported weekly COVID-19 cases, weekly positivity rates, overall positivity rates and overall fatality rates

- Gradual decrease in positivity rates and number of newly reported COVID-19 cases in the last six weeks (Figure 1). Overall positivity rate decreased to 15.94% on 6 February from 16.26% on 30 January 2021. (Figure 1)
- Total number of conducted tests increased to 14,105 between 31 January-6 February from 13,922 between 24-30 January 2021.
- Newly reported COVID-19 cases and incidence per 100,000 population decreased in all Gaza Strip districts (Figure 2 and 3).

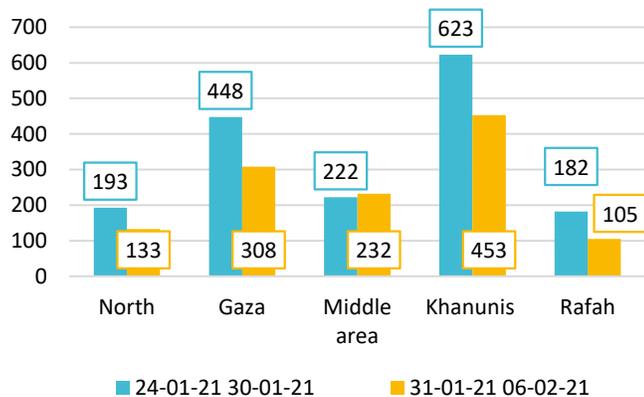


Figure 2: Newly reported weekly COVID-19 cases in Gaza Strip districts

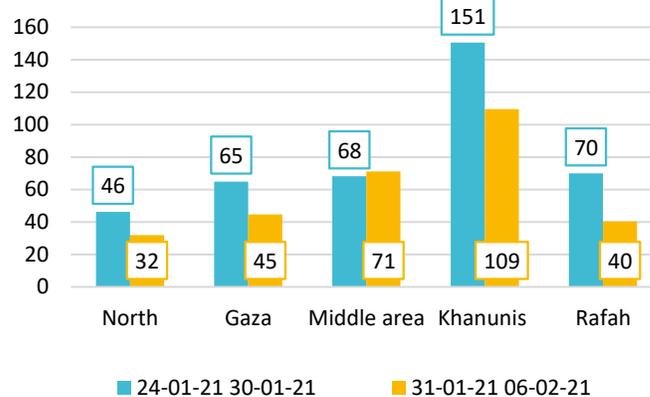
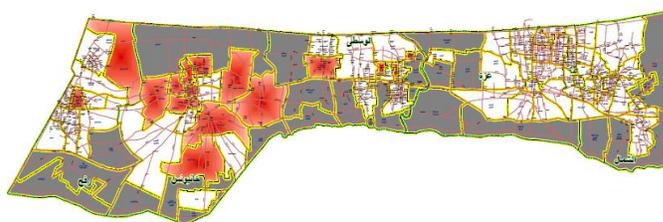


Figure 3: Incidence of weekly COVID-19 reported cases per 100,000 population in Gaza Strip districts

- Number of red coded remained the same at the two comparison dates (Figure 4) but the red coded areas changed from middle area to Khanunis and Rafah. Both Gaza and North districts are not coded in red for the second week in a row.



25 January 2021



2 February 2021

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

POSITIVITY RATES

- Continued decrease in overall COVID-19 positivity rates to 8.73% between 31 January-6 February from 11.98% between 24-30 January 2021.
- Decrease occurred in all five districts between 24-30 January and 31 January-6 February 2021 (Figure 5).
- Positivity rates decreased among all testing categories as illustrated in the general table on page 1.
- Overall positivity rate up to 6 February 2021 reached 15.9%.

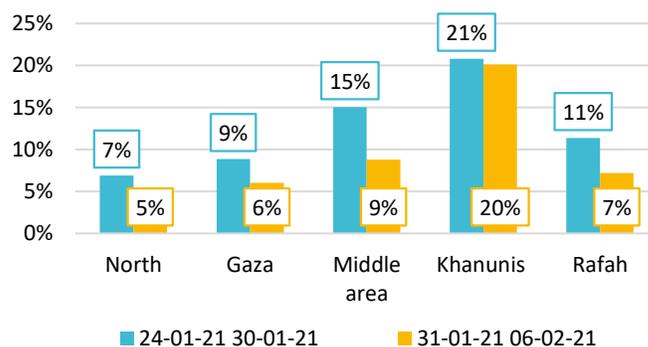


Figure 5: Reported COVID-19 weekly positivity rates in Gaza Strip districts

DISTRIBUTION OF COVID-19 CASES AMONG AGE GROUPS AND GENDER

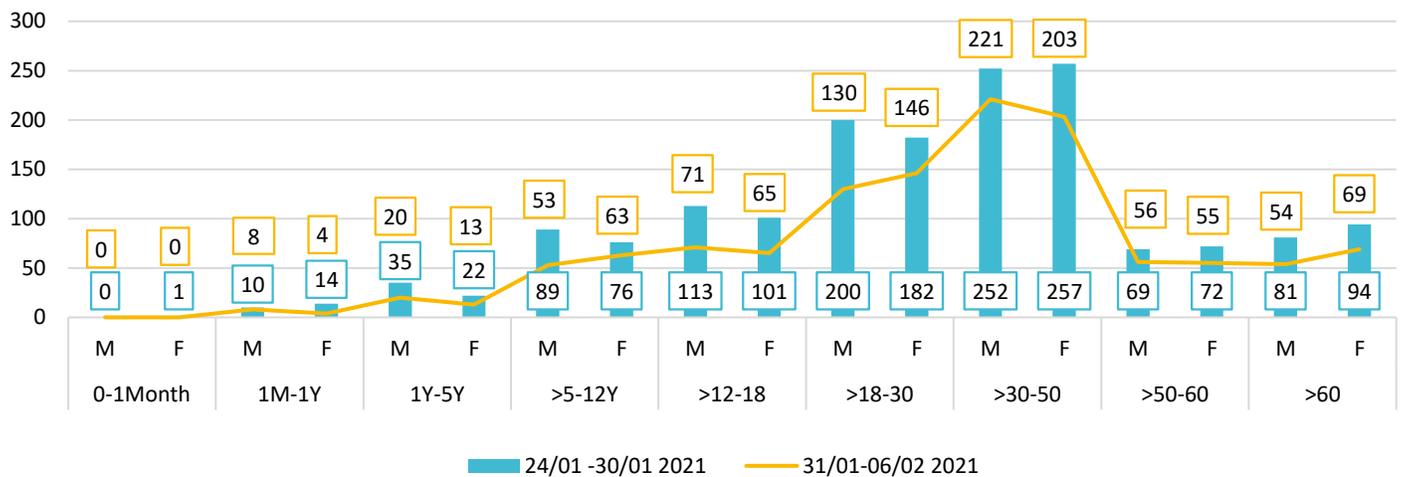


Figure 6: Weekly newly reported COVID-19 cases distributed by age groups and gender

- Highest reported COVID-19 cases are among people aged 18 to 50 both between 24-30 January and 31 January-6 February 2021. Continuing decreasing trend in the last five weeks (Figure 6).
- Overall decrease in reported COVID-19 cases among all age groups and genders between 24-30 January and 31 January-6 February 2021 (Figure 6).

DISTRIBUTION OF COVID-19 DEATHS

- In line with the decreasing trend in the number of cases, reported deaths continue to decrease in the last six weeks: 7 reported COVID-19 deaths between 31 January-6 February, compared to 14 between 24-30 January 2021 (Figure 7).
- Majority of reported COVID-19 deaths are from people aged 60 years and older (Figure 7).
- One death reported among people aged >50 to 60 between 31 January-6 February, compared to 2 deaths between 24-30 January 2021.
- Total reported deaths since the start of COVID-19 outbreak in the Gaza Strip until 6 February 2021 reached 529 with an accumulative COVID-19 fatality rate of 1%.
- Out of the 529 deaths, 299 were males (57%) and 230 were females (43%).

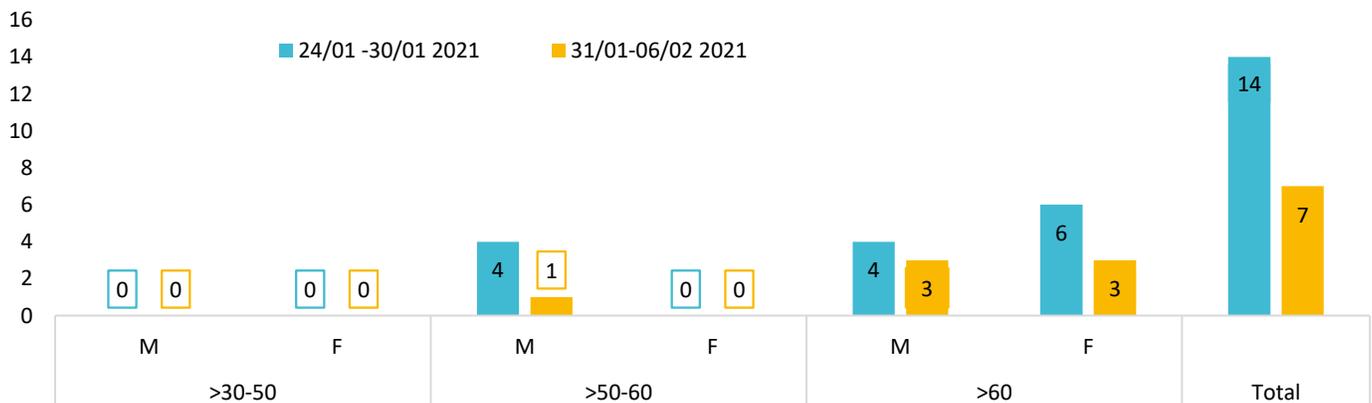


Figure 7: Distribution of reported COVID-19 deaths by age groups and gender

DISTRIBUTION OF COVID-19 CASES BY SEVERITY

- Cumulative moderate cases admitted to hospitals decreased to 22 on 6 February compared to 35 cases on 30 January 2021 (Figure 8).
- Cumulative severe cases admitted to hospitals slightly increased to 33 cases on 6 February compared to 32 cases on 30 January 2021.
- Cumulative critical cases admitted to hospitals increased to 7 cases on 6 February compared to 5 cases on 30 January 2021.
- Stability is in line with the lower number of newly reported COVID-19 cases and deaths. Monitoring of number of admitted severe and critical cases will be monitored.

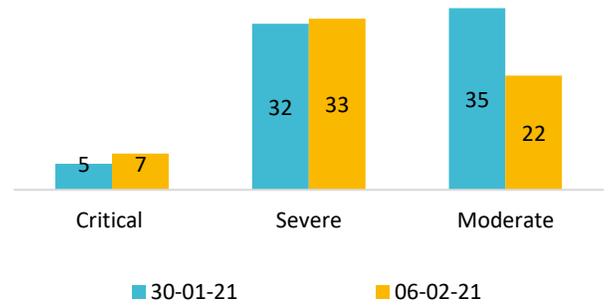


Figure 8: Classification of cumulative hospital admitted COVID-19 patients by severity

HEALTH SYSTEM CAPACITY (COVID-19 MANAGEMENT)

- In line with the gradual decrease in number of hospital-admitted COVID-19 patients, the total bed occupancy rate continues to decrease since the last seven weeks. Total COVID-19 bed occupancy rate decreased to 15% on 6 February compared to 18% on 30 January 2021 (Figure 9).
- A slight increase in high dependency and ICU occupancy rates occurred (Figure 9) as a result of the slight increase in the accumulative admitted cases.

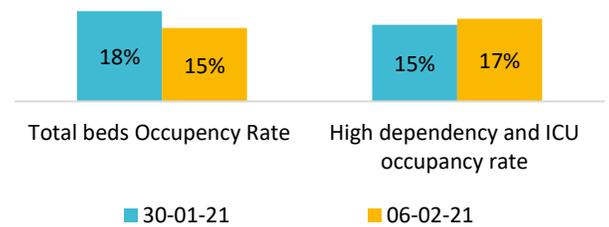


Figure 9: Occupancy rates of COVID-19 beds classified by type of bed

HEALTH CARE WORKERS INFECTIONS

- Decrease/no change in number of active COVID-19 cases among most health workforce categories except for male workers (Figure 10).
- Total number of active COVID-19 cases decreased to 59 on 6 February from 71 on 30 January 2021 (Figure 10).
- Decrease in reported COVID-19 infections among health workforce, with the number of newly infected workers decreasing to 21 between 31 January-6 February, compared to 39 between 24-30 January 2021 (Figure 11).
- More than 50% of the newly infected workers between 31 January-6 February were working at hospitals (Figure 11).

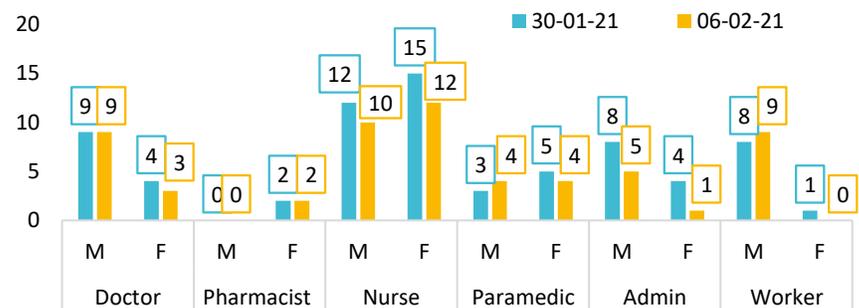


Figure 10: Active reported COVID-19 cases among health workforce distributed

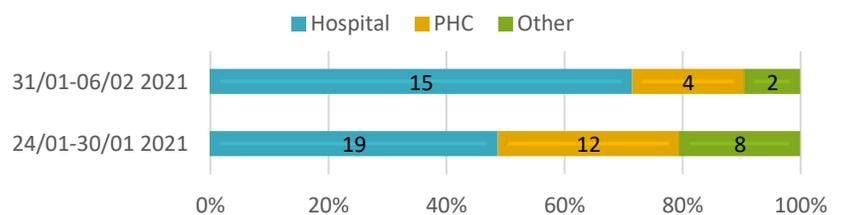


Figure 11: Distribution of newly weekly reported COVID-19 cases among health workforce distributed by work setting

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Total newly reported COVID-19 cases and positivity rates continue to decrease since the last six reporting weeks in all Gaza strip districts. Similarly, number of COVID-19 patients admitted to hospitals in severe and critical health conditions, as well as bed occupancy rates continue to be stable and/or decrease, indicating a flattening of the curve of COVID-19 infections after implementing stricter public health measures.
- Gaza authorities declared further easing of public health measures by lifting night curfew measures on week days and lifting of all-day Friday and Saturday curfew. The Ministry of Education re-opened preparatory and secondary schools. Clear monitoring, strong surveillance and trend analysis, and contact tracing should remain in place to evaluate the results of easing the measures during the coming weeks, combined with maintaining strict adherence to COVID-19 mitigation measures.
- 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.
- As COVID-19 cases are decreasing, health facilities can refocus their efforts on revitalising the provision of essential health services and elective care. A slight increase in reported COVID19 infection among health workforce is noticed during this reporting week which reflect the necessity maintaining robust IPC measures in all health facilities is vital to sustain the before mentioned achievements.
- While the COVID-19 situation is clearly improving, the health system in the Gaza Strip remains fragile with MOH reporting 45% of all essential medicines and 33% of essential disposables at zero stock levels. Strengthening of the health care system and supporting vulnerable communities in the Gaza Strip should be the main goal.
- As part of the National Deployment and Vaccination Plan (NDVP), Gaza health authorities supported by WHO, UNICEF and UNRWA, are making the necessary preparations for the upcoming arrival of COVID-19 vaccines, in line with the agreed prioritisation of vulnerable groups, including training of health workers to correctly receive, store and administer vaccines, as well as adequate response to potential Adverse Effects Following Immunization (AEFI). Preparations are also ongoing to inform the broader public on future vaccination, and to address potential vaccine hesitancy.