

COVID-19 Clinical and Surveillance Data — December 9, 2022 to March 16, 2023, China

Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention

1. COVID-19 Infection Surveillance Data

1.1 Nucleic Acid Test Data

Since December 9, 2022, the number of positive nucleic acid tests and the positive rate reported from provincial-level administrative divisions (PLADs) had gradually increased, peaking on December 22, 2022 with 6.94 million positive tests and a 29.2% positive testing rate on December 25, 2022. After this peak, the number of positive nucleic acid tests fluctuated decreased, reaching a low of 4,917 on March 16, 2023, with a rate of 0.8% (Figure 1-1).

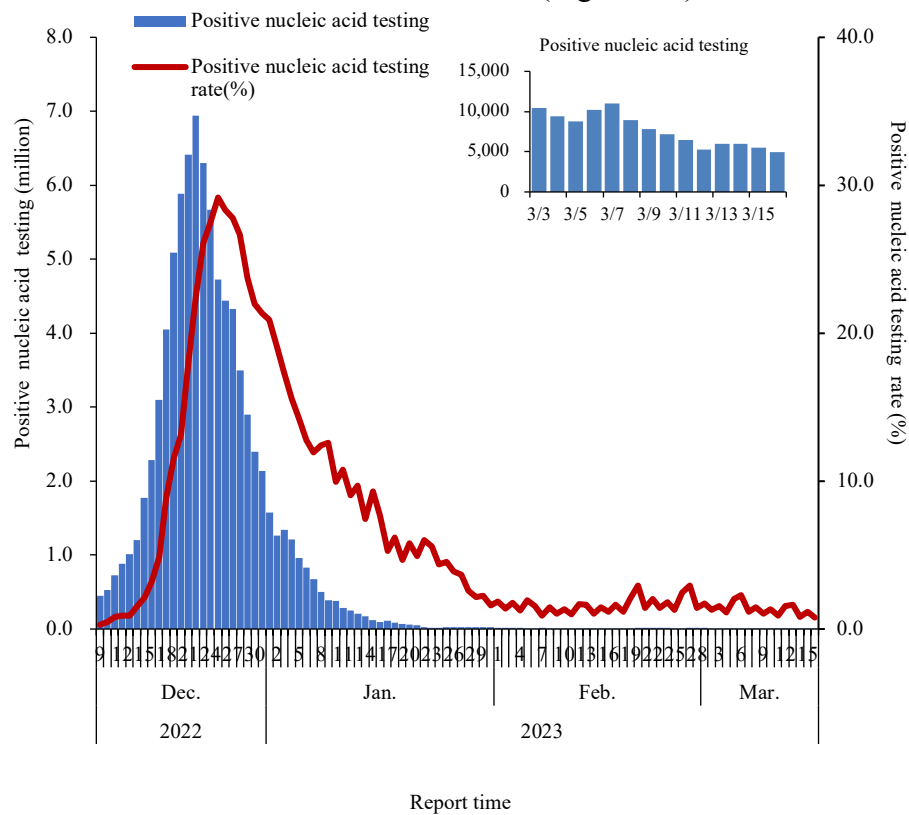


Figure 1-1 Daily number of positive nucleic acid testing and rate.
(Data reported by PLADs in Chinese mainland)

1.2 COVID-19 Antigen Test Data

The number of antigen tests reported by PLADs was generally low and gradually decreased. For example, the number of antigen tests reported reached a high of 1.89 million on December 19, 2022 and dropped to a low of 49,000 on March 16, 2023. The number of positive antigen tests and the positive rate increased rapidly after December 9, peaking on December 22, 2022 (337,000, 21.3%) before fluctuating to 194 and 0.4%, respectively, by March 16, 2023 (Figure 1-2).

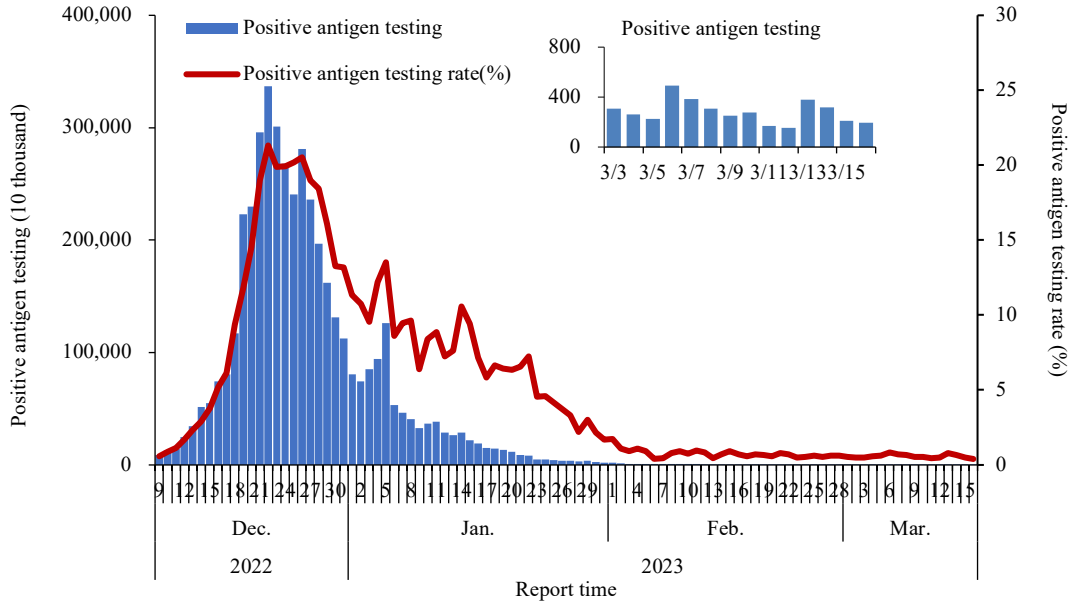


Figure 1-2 COVID-19 antigen test and positive rate.
(Data reported by PLADs in Chinese mainland)

2. Fever Clinic Diagnosis and Treatment Data

2.1 Fever Clinic Visit Data

The number of fever clinic visits in Chinese mainland peaked at 2.867 million on December 23, 2022. Visits continuously decreased until January 23, 2023 and fluctuated at a low level. Then the number of visits fluctuated upwards in the last three weeks (February 24 to March 16, 2023, including plateaued in about last ten days) and reached to 483,000 on March 16, 2023, representing a cumulative decrease of 83.2% from the peak (Figure 2-1).

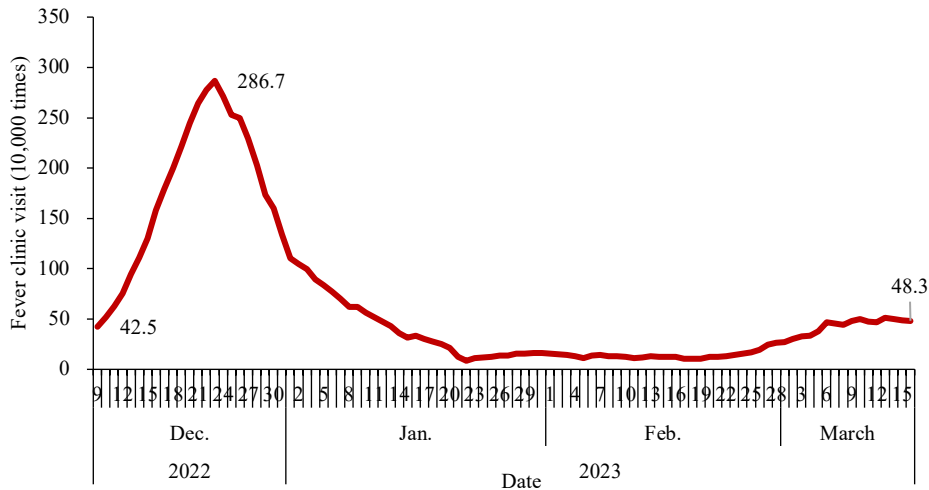


Figure 2-1 Trends of fever clinic visit data.
(Data reported by PLADs in Chinese mainland)

2.2 Rural Area

The number of fever clinic visits at township health centers in rural area peaked at 922,000 on December 23, 2022. Visits then continuously decreased till January 22, 2022 and fluctuated at a low level. Then the number of visits fluctuated upwards in the last three weeks (February 24 to 16, 2023) to 97,000 on March 16, 2023, representing a decrease of 89.5% from the peak (Figure 2-2).

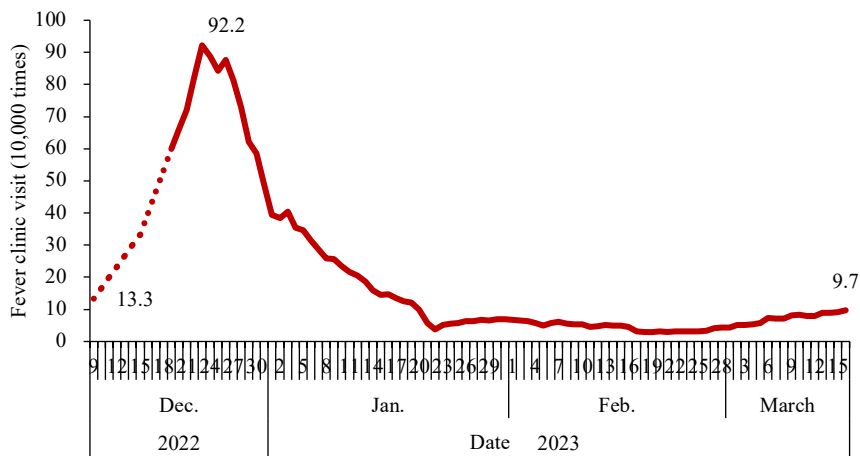


Figure 2-2 Trends of rural fever clinic visit data
(Data reported by PLADs in Chinese mainland)

2.3 Urban Area

The number of fever clinic visits to the second level and above hospitals and urban community health service centers in urban areas peaked at 1.954 million on December 22, 2022. Visits continuously decreased until January 22, 2022 and fluctuated at a low level. Then the number of visits fluctuated upwards in the last three weeks (March 3 to 16, 2023, including plateaued in about last ten days) to 386,000 on March 16, 2023, representing a decrease of 80.2% from the peak (Figure 2-3).

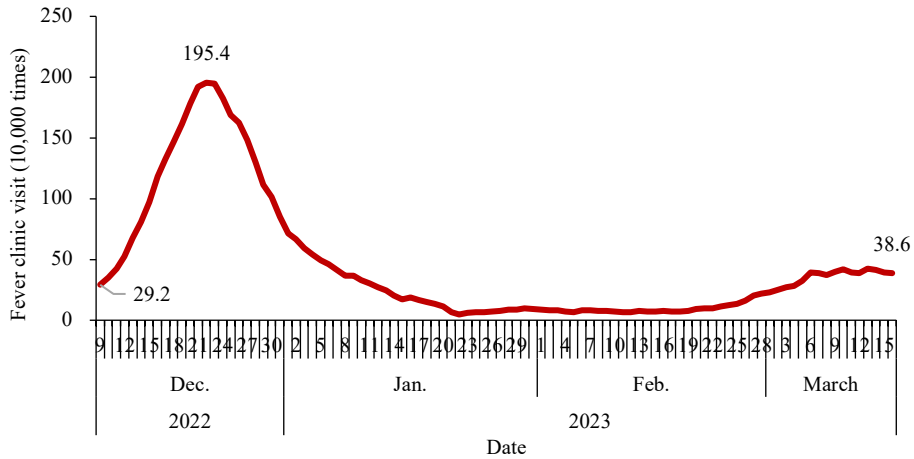


Figure 2-3 Trends of urban fever clinic visit data.
(Data reported by PLADs in Chinese mainland)

2.4 Surveillance Data of Influenza Sentinel Hospitals and Laboratories

Since December 9, 2022, surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 has been conducted by influenza surveillance sentinel hospitals (824 sentinel hospitals reported data, including 546 national-level sentinel hospitals and 278 non-national-level sentinel hospitals) and national influenza surveillance network laboratories (402 laboratories reported data). From September to early December 2022, the weekly number of influenza-like illness (ILI, fever with temperature $\geq 38^{\circ}\text{C}$, accompanied by cough or sore throat) in sentinel hospitals remained around 100,000, and ILI% was between 2.7% and 3.6%. The ILI% began to increase rapidly from Week 50 (8.5%) and reached its peak in Week 51 (12.1%). It then started to decline dramatically from Week 52. ILI% (1.8%) began to show an increasing trend in Week 7 of 2023 (February 13–19). In Week 10 of 2023 (March 6–12), ILI% was 9.1% (Figure 2-4).

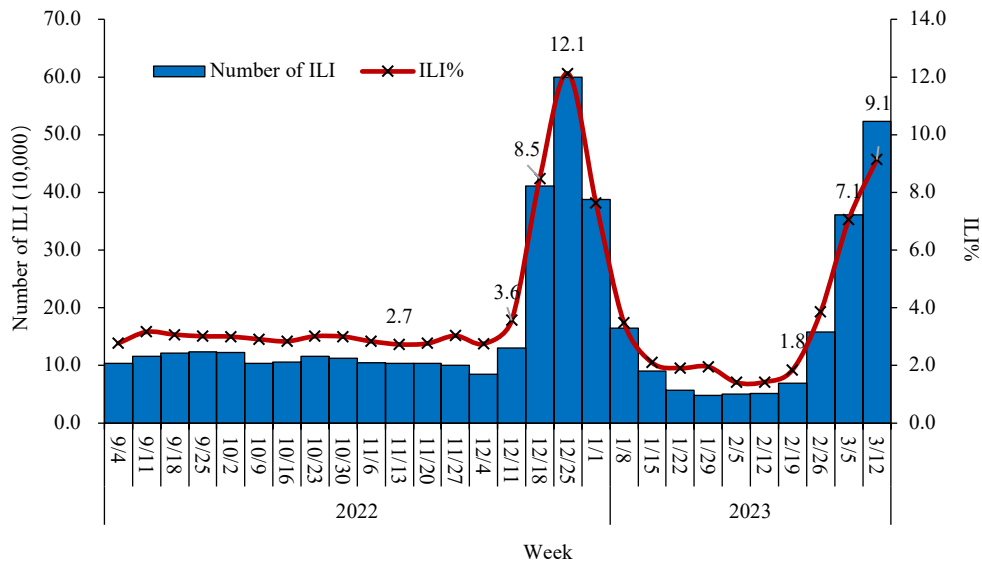


Figure 2-4 ILI and ILI% Reported by sentinel hospitals in the mainland of China.
(Reported data were from 824 sentinel hospitals)

Influenza surveillance network laboratories tested both SARS-CoV-2 and influenza viruses in ILI samples simultaneously. In Week 49 (December 9–15, 2022), the positive rate of SARS-CoV-2 began to increase and reached its peak between Weeks 51 and 52, then continued to reduce. In Week 7 (February 13–19, 2023), the positive rate of SARS-CoV-2 slightly reduced to 3.4%, fluctuated at a low level, and kept decreasing in last two weeks. In Week 10 (March 6–12, 2023), the positive rate of SARS-CoV-2 slightly reduced to 2.7%, which is lower than the positive rate of SARS-CoV-2 (3.8%) in Week 8 (February 27–March 5, 2023). During the same period, the positive rate of influenza virus gradually decreased to a very low level in late December 2022, remained less than 1% until early February. It began to show an increasing trend from Week 6 (February 6–12, 2023) and increased to 53.2% in Week 10 (March 6–12, 2023) (Figure 2-5).

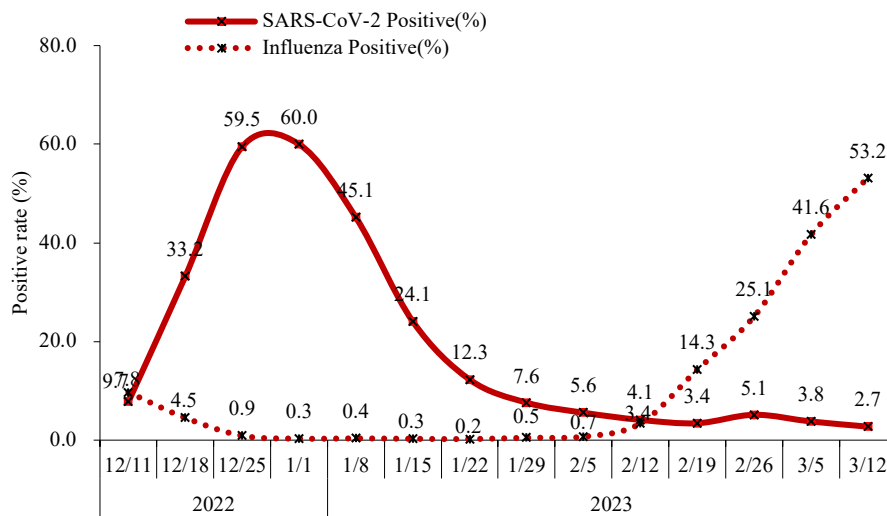


Figure 2-5 Positive rate of SARS-CoV-2 and influenza virus in ILI samples from sentinel hospitals in the mainland of China (Reported data were from 402 laboratories)

3. Hospitalization Data

3.1 No. of COVID-19

The number of COVID-19 in hospitals nationwide peaked at 1.625 million on January 5, 2023. Infections continually decreased to 7,091 on March 16, 2023, representing a decrease of 99.6% from the peak (Figure 3-1).

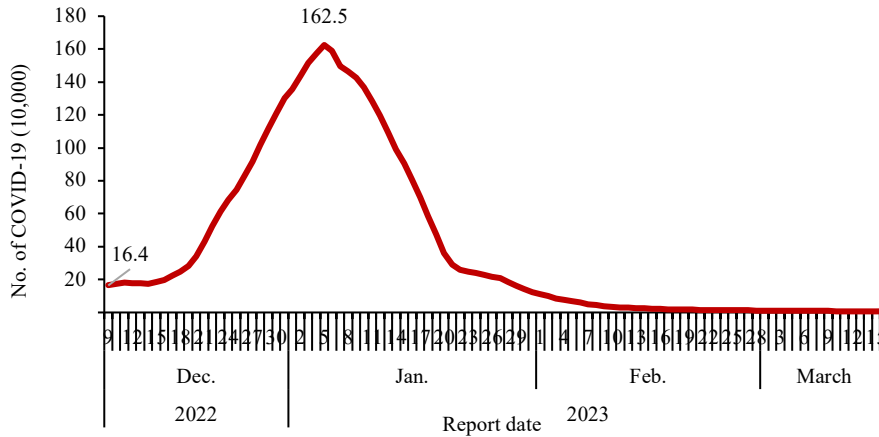


Figure 3-1 The Number of COVID-19 in Hospitals
(Data reported by PLADs in Chinese mainland)

3.2 No. of Severe Cases in Hospitals

The number of severe cases in hospitals increased by nearly 10,000 per day between December 27, 2022 and January 3, 2023. Cases peaked at 128,000 on January 5, 2023, and then continually decreased to 7 (2 severe cases of SARS-CoV-2 and 5 cases with comorbidities and SARS-CoV-2) on March 16, 2023, representing a decrease of 99.9% from the peak (Figure 3-2).

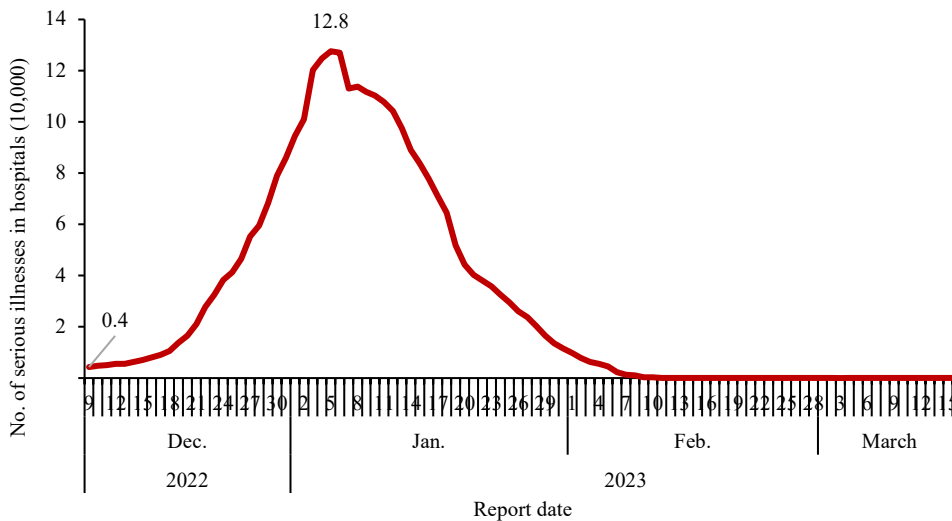


Figure 3-2 No. of severe cases in hospitals.
(Data reported by PLADs in Chinese mainland)

3.3 No. of Deaths with SARS-CoV-2 in Hospitals

The number of death cases in hospitals increased to a peaked of 4,273 on January 4, 2023, and then continually decreased to 0 on March 9, 2023. From March 10 to March 16, 0 deaths associated with SARS-CoV-2 were reported by medical institutions from provincial level administrative divisions (PLADs), including 0 death case of respiratory failure caused by SARS-CoV-2, and 0 death cases of underlying comorbidities with SARS-CoV-2 infection.

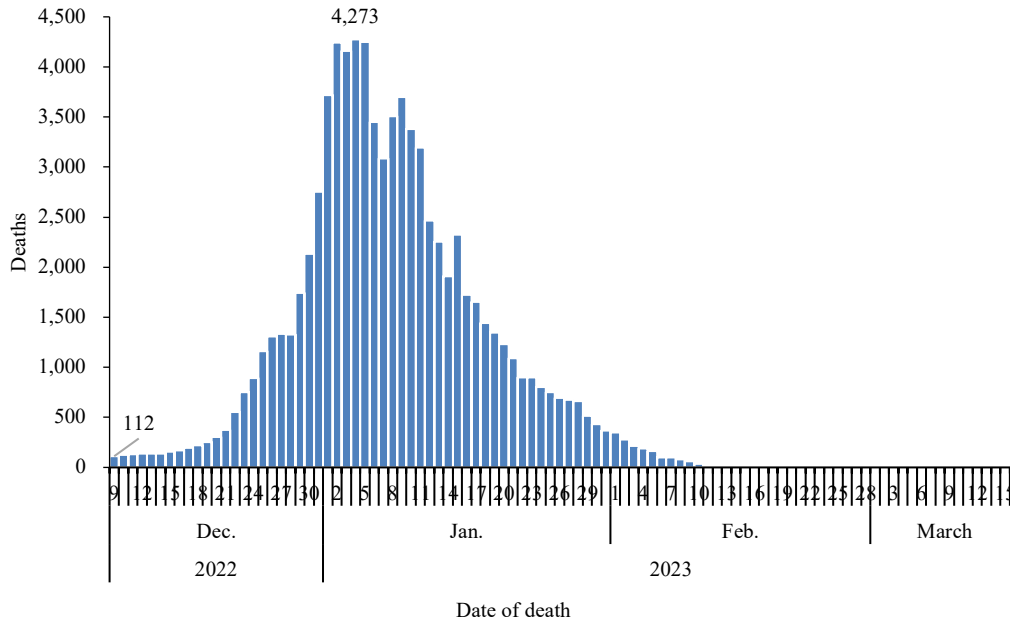


Figure 3-3 No. of deaths with SARS-CoV-2 in hospitals.
(Data reported by PLADs in Chinese mainland)

4. SARS-CoV-2 Variants Surveillance of Domestic Cases in Chinese Mainland

4.1. Dynamic of SARS-CoV-2 Variants from Domestic Cases in Chinese Mainland

From September 26, 2022 to March 16, 2023, 33,486 valid SARS-CoV-2 genome sequences from domestic cases were reported nationwide. Of these, 107 Omicron lineages were identified with the predominant lineages being BA.5.2.48 (45.6%), BF.7.14 (23.8%), BA.5.2.49 (9.9%), and DY.1 (8.4%). Overall, 24 lineages had a proportion of 0.1% to 2.9%, including BF.7.14.1, etc. The other 79 lineages were minority with the proportion below 0.1%, accounting for 0.9% (Figure 4-1).

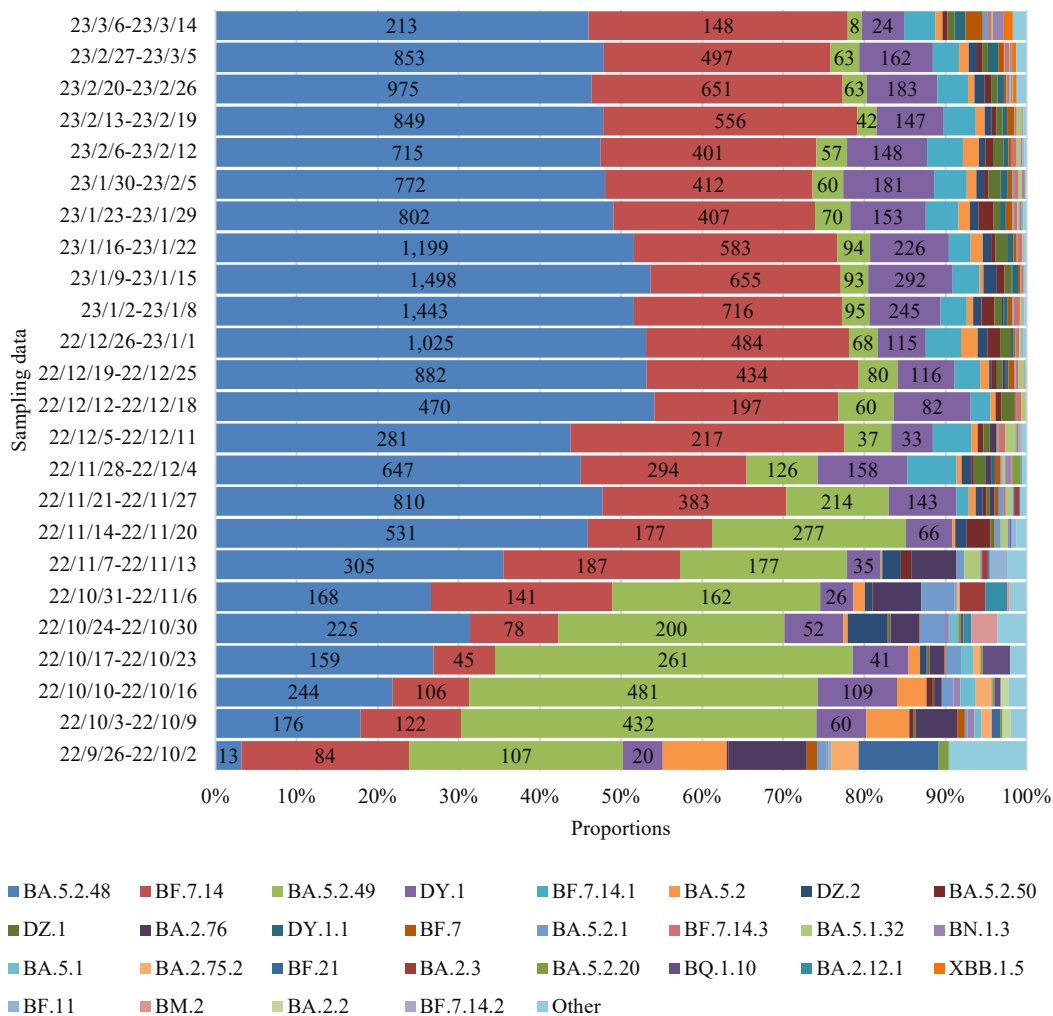


Figure 4-1 Dynamic trend of SARS-CoV-2 lineages from domestic cases in Chinese mainland by week.

Note: 1) Sampling date interval: September 26, 2022 to March 14, 2023; 2) The numbers marked in the figure were the number of valid genome sequences of BA.5.2.48, BF.7.14, BA.5.2.49, and DY.1 lineages respectively; 3) “Other” referred to the lineages with the proportions of Omicron variants less than 0.1% nationwide.

4.2. Genomic Surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 Variants among Domestic Cases

From December 1, 2022 to March 16, 2023, 24,789 valid SARS-CoV-2 genome sequences from domestic cases were reported nationwide, all of which were Omicron variants with a total of 62 lineages. The predominant lineages are BA.5.2.48 (50.0%), BF.7.14 (26.4%), and DY.1 (8.9%) (Table 4-1). A total of 86 domestic cases of variants of concern were found, including 4 cases of BQ.1, 2 cases of BQ.1.1, 1 case of BQ.1.1.17, 1 case of BQ.1.1.38, 2 cases of BQ.1.1.66, 1 case of BQ.1.1.69, 6 cases of BQ.1.2, 2 cases of BQ.1.8, 1 case of DT.2, 2 cases of XBB.1, 2 cases of XBB.1.11.1, 1 case of XBB.1.12, 27 cases of XBB.1.5, 1 case of XBB.1.5.5, 7 cases of XBB.1.5.7, 2 cases of XBB.1.9, 16 cases of XBB.1.9.1, 5 cases of XBB.1.9.2, 1 case of XBB.2.3, and 2 cases of XBB.3.

Table 4-1 National proportions of SARS-CoV-2 variants.
(December 1, 2022 to March 16, 2023)

Omicron lineages	Proportions (%)
BA.5.2.48	50.0
BF.7.14	26.4
DY.1	8.9
BA.5.2.49	3.9
BF.7.14.1	3.7
BA.5.2	1.1
DZ.1	1.0
DZ.2	1.0
BA.5.2.50	0.9
DY.1.1	0.6
BF.7	0.5
BF.7.14.3	0.5
BA.5.1.32	0.3
BN.1.3	0.1
BA.2.76	0.1
BA.5.2.1	0.1
XBB.1.5	0.1
BA.5.2.20	0.1
BF.7.14.2	0.1
XBB.1.9.1	0.1
BA.5.2.6	0.1
Other	0.4
Total	100.0

4.3. Genomic Surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 Variants among Domestic Cases in Each PLAD

Overall, BF.7 and its descendant lineages were predominant in Beijing, Inner Mongolia, and Tianjin. BA.5.2 and its descendant lineages were predominant in other PLADs (Figure 4-2).

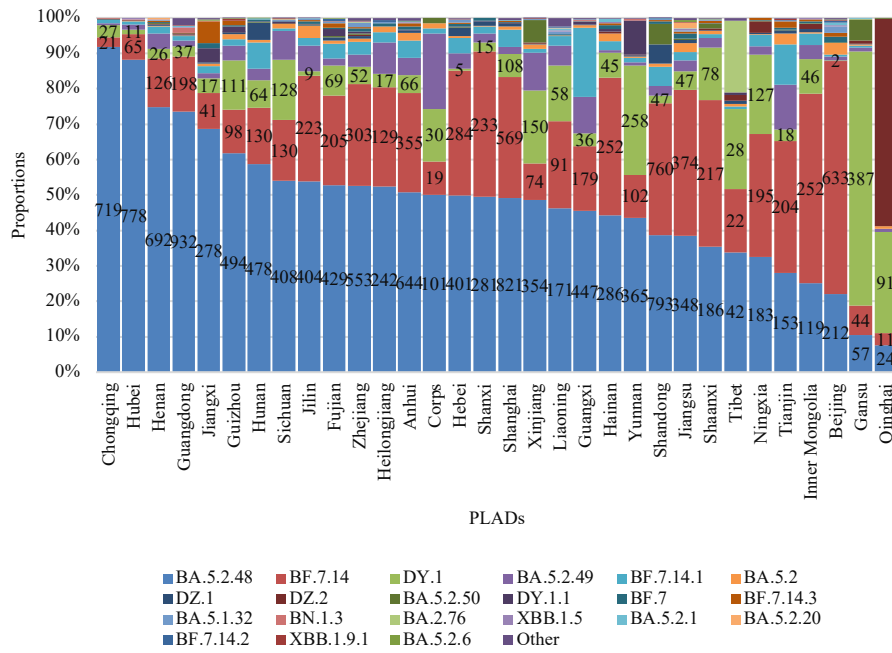


Figure 4-2 SARS-CoV-2 variants surveillance by PLADs

Notes: 1) Sampling date interval: December 1, 2022 to March 14, 2023; 2) The numbers marked in the figure represented the number of valid genome sequences of BA.5.2.48, BF.7.14, and DY.1 lineages respectively; 3) “Other” referred to the lineages with the proportions of Omicron variants less than 0.1% nationwide.

5. COVID-19 Vaccination Progress

As of March 16, 2023, 3.49 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccine have been administered in China’s mainland (Figure 5-1). Since the start of the vaccination campaign, 1.31 billion people received at least one dose, 1.28 billion people completed a primary series, and 827.55 million people received their first booster dose (booster doses are recommended only for adults 18 years and older). Therefore, based on the population size in the Seventh Census of mainland China, 93.0% of the entire, all-ages population initiated vaccination and 90.6% completed their primary series (Figure 5-2). Among the 60-years and older population, 680.32 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine have been administered, 241.70 million people received at least one dose, 230.35 million completed primary series, and 193.02 million received their first booster dose.

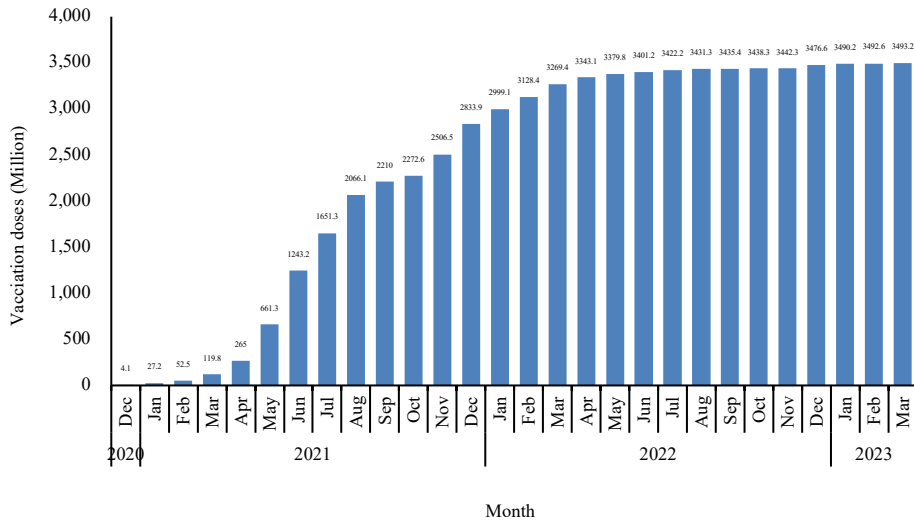


Figure 5-1 Cumulative COVID-19 vaccine doses administered in China by month. (Data reported by PLADs in Chinese mainland)

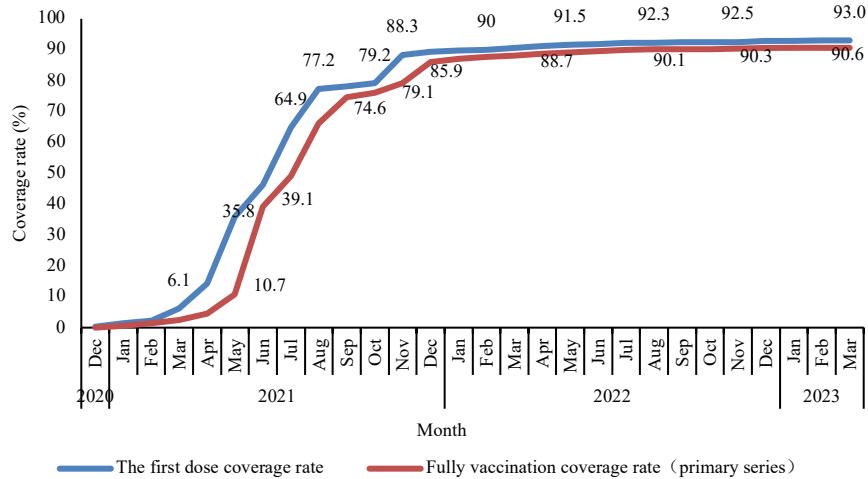


Figure 5-2 First-dose and primary series COVID-19 vaccine coverage of the entire population of Chinese mainland, by Month. (Data reported by PLADs in Chinese mainland)

Based on an investigation on vaccination among elder population in early December 2022, vaccination rate of people over 60 years old reached 96.1%. In these elderly populations, 96.7% completed their full primary series and 92.5% of minimum-interval-eligible elderly individuals received their first booster dose (Figure 5-3).

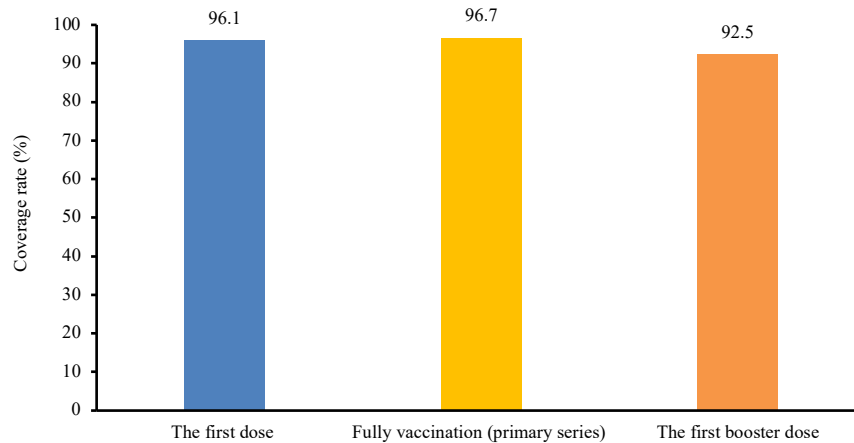


Figure 5-3 COVID-19 vaccine coverage of individuals 60 years and older: first-dose coverage, primary series coverage among interval-eligible individuals, and booster dose coverage among booster-dose-eligible individuals (based on reported population by each PLAD).

Notes: For calculating first dose coverage, the numerator was the number of people who had received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine approved at the time, and the denominator was the size of the registered population of elderly people (aged 60 or older) in a recent investigation targeting the elderly population.

For calculating full, primary series coverage, the numerator was the number of elderly people who received two doses of inactivated vaccine, one dose of adenovirus vectored vaccine, or three doses of recombinant protein vaccine. The denominator was the number of people who had received one dose of inactivated vaccine, one dose of adenovirus vectored vaccine, or two doses of recombinant protein vaccine with the recommended interval of 28 days (4 weeks).

For calculating first booster dose coverage, the numerator was the number of elderly people who received their first booster dose, and the denominator was the number of people who received full primary series with either two doses of inactivated vaccine or one dose of adenovirus vectored vaccine, with a three-month interval between primary series completion and booster dose administration. Individuals who received three doses of recombinant protein vaccine were not included in the denominator due to the short time between approval of that vaccine and the booster vaccination effort.

Acknowledgement:

Department of Medical Administration, National Health Commission of the People’s Republic of China, Department of Medical Emergency Response, National Health Commission of the People’s Republic of China, Surveillance and Alert Department, National Bureau of Disease Control and Prevention, Health and Immunization Programme Department, National Bureau of Disease Control and Prevention, Provincial Health Commission, Provincial Center for Disease Prevention and Control, Healthcare Institutes, School of Public Health, Tsinghua University, School of Public Health, Peking University.