

Ashgabat, March 25- April 04, 2025 - In an effort to strengthen virological surveillance of influenza and acute respiratory infections in Turkmenistan, the World Health Organization Country Office (WHO CO) facilitated a technical advisory mission from WHO/Europe to Turkmenistan.

As part of the mission, a specialized 10-day training course on “Characteristics of isolation and antigenic characteristics of influenza viruses” was conducted by Dr. Darya Danilenko, WHO/Europe expert in strengthening virological laboratory surveillance of influenza. The training took place at the Virological Reference Laboratory of the Center for Public Health and Nutrition under the State Sanitary and Epidemiological Service of the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry of Turkmenistan.

The key objective of the training was to enhance the capacity of virologists at the National Influenza Center recognized by WHO in virological diagnostics and laboratory procedures, thereby contributing to more effective disease control and monitoring. Over the course of the training, participants gained a theoretical understanding of cell cultures, including their cultivation, preservation, and use in virology. They also received a detailed overview of consumables and reagents required for working with cell lines.

Additionally, participants developed practical skills in reseeding, preserving, and infecting cell cultures to isolate influenza viruses. The course further focused on methodologies for isolating and antigenically characterizing influenza viruses in accordance with international WHO recommendations. Virologists also gained experience in isolating and identifying influenza viruses and learned to interpret the results of antigen analysis provided in reports of the WHO Collaborating Center for Influenza.

This initiative is expected to enhance influenza surveillance systems, ensuring timely and accurate detection of viral infections. The mission highlights Turkmenistan’s dedication to advancing public health and aligns with WHO’s broader efforts to strengthen health systems across the European Region.

The technical advisory mission was organized as part of the implementation of the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework (PIP) project in Turkmenistan.