

Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report



Week 41 2004

**Week starting Monday 4^h October 2004 &
ending Sunday 10th October 2004**

Report produced: 14/10/2004

This report is produced in collaboration with the Departments of Public Health

Summary

During week 41 2004, influenza activity remained at low levels in Ireland, with twelve cases of ILI reported by the sentinel GPs. Seven sentinel swabs were submitted to the NVRL for testing. None tested positive for influenza or RSV. During week 40 one sentinel swab tested positive for influenza A. Subtyping and antigenic characterisation of this isolate is underway.

Clinical data

During week 41 2004 (week ending the 10th of October 2004), twelve influenza-like illness (ILI) cases was reported by sentinel general practices, corresponding to an ILI consultation rate of 18.6 per 100,000 population (figure 1). This is an increase from the updated rate of 6.9 per 100,000 population in week 40. Twenty-five of the 35 (71.4%) sentinel general practices reported during week 41, with seven reporting ILI. Ten ILI cases were in the 15-64 age group and two were over 65 years.

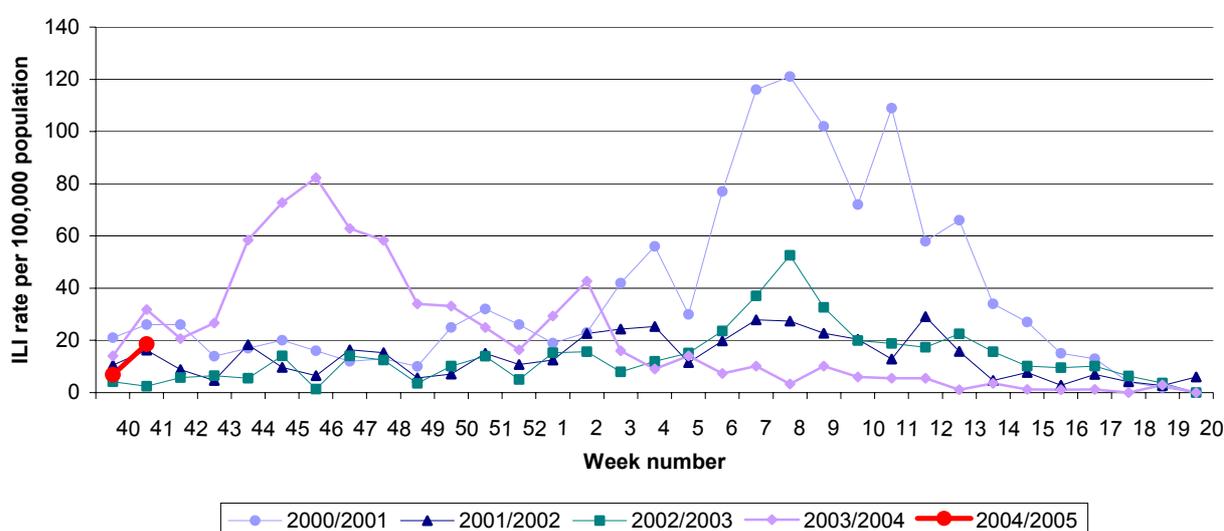


Figure 1. GP consultation rate for ILI per 100,000 population by week, during the 2000/2001, 2001/2002, 2002/2003, 2003/2004 & 2004/2005-influenza seasons.

Virological data from the National Virus Reference Laboratory

During week 41, the National Virus Reference Laboratory (NVRL) received seven swabs from sentinel GPs. All tested negative for influenza and RSV (table 1). An influenza A virus detected during week 40 was the first detection of influenza in Ireland this season and this isolate is currently undergoing subtyping and antigenic characterisation.

The NVRL also tested 14 respiratory non-sentinel specimens, mainly from hospitals and some GPs, during week 41. No specimens were positive for influenza A or B, parainfluenza virus type 1, 2 or 3 or respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).

Table 1: Sentinel GP influenza results by type, subtype and report week for the 2004/2005 influenza season

Week number	Total swabs	Positive swabs	Percentage positive	Influenza A (Unsubtyped)	Influenza B
40	2	1	50	1	0
41	7	0	0	0	0
Total	9	1	11.1	0	0

Table 2: Total number of sentinel and non-sentinel* influenza A and B positive specimens by health board for week 41 and the 2004/2005 season to date

	Week 41 2004			Season to date		
	Flu A	Flu B	Total	Flu A	Flu B	Total
ERHA	0	0	0	0	0	0
MHB	0	0	0	0	0	0
MWHB	1	0	1	1	0	1
NEHB	0	0	0	0	0	0
NWHB	0	0	0	0	0	0
SEHB	0	0	0	0	0	0
SHB	0	0	0	0	0	0
WHB	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1	0	1	1	0	1

* Please note that non-sentinel specimens include all specimens referred to the NVRL, these specimens are mainly from hospitals and some GPs and may include more than one specimen from each case.

Influenza activity by health board/authority

Influenza activity is reported on a weekly basis from the Departments of Public Health. Influenza activity is based on sentinel GP ILI consultation rates, laboratory confirmed cases of influenza, sentinel hospital admissions data and/or sentinel school absenteeism data. During week 40, three health boards reported sporadic activity, three reported no activity and two health boards had received no reports.

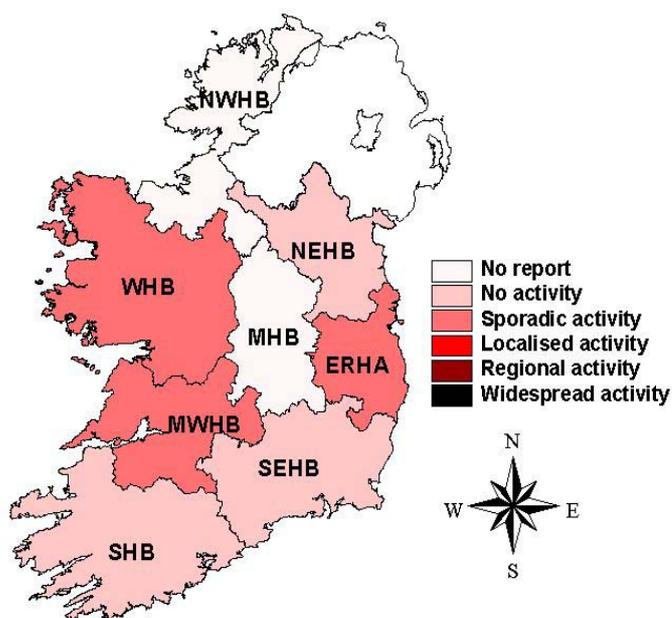


Figure 2: Map of influenza activity by health board/authority during week 40 2004

Influenza activity in Northern Ireland

The ILI rate increased during week 41 in Northern Ireland, but remained at low levels. In particular, the age-specific combined rate for clinical influenza and ILI increased in the 5-14 age group. Returns were received from 22 sentinel GP practices, giving a population coverage of 7.7%. Thirty-seven cases of ILI were reported, corresponding to an ILI rate of 28.1 per 100,000 population. No influenza viruses were detected during week 40 or week 41. <http://www.cdscni.org.uk/>

Influenza activity in England, Scotland and Wales

Clinical ILI activity remained low in the UK during week 41. The RCGP combined GP consultation rate for influenza and ILI was 10.7 per 100,000 population during in England. An ILI rate of 8 per 100,000 population was reported by the Scottish sentinel GP scheme and the rate for influenza consultations in Wales was 0.5 per 100,000 population during week 41. There have been no laboratory confirmed cases of influenza reported by the UK to date this season.

SCIEH:

<http://www.show.scot.nhs.uk/scieh/infectious/respiratory/influenzasurveillance/servis.htm>

HPA: http://www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/influenza/fluactivity0304.htm

Influenza activity in Europe

During week 41, very low levels of influenza activity were seen throughout Europe. The first confirmed detection of influenza in the 2004/2005 season in Europe was in Norway in week 36 (influenza A/Wellington/1/2004(H3N2)-like virus). During week 41, one specimen from the Czech Republic tested positive for influenza B and a specimen from France tested positive for Influenza A (unsubtyped). EISS will begin publishing its weekly electronic bulletin on the 15th October. <http://www.eiss.org/>

Influenza activity in Canada

Increased activity, including four outbreaks of laboratory confirmed influenza have been reported in Eastern Ontario for weeks 34 to 36 2004. All four outbreaks have been confirmed as influenza A by rapid antigen testing. Strain characterisation of the virus associated with the first outbreak has identified the strain as A/Fujian/411/02(H3N2)-like virus, Elsewhere in Canada influenza-like illness rates are low, with only British Columbia reporting sporadic detections of influenza. <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pphb-dgsp/fluwatch/index.html>

Influenza activity in the United States

Reports on influenza surveillance for the 2004/2005 season in the US will be available on October 15th 2004. <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/flu/fluvirus.htm>

Influenza activity Worldwide

During week 41, sporadic activity was reported in Australia (4 A (not subtyped) and 1 B), China (17 A(H3), 3 A(not subtyped) and 9 B) and the Ukraine. <http://rhone.b3e.jussieu.fr/flunet/www/>

There have been a number of localised outbreaks reported in New Zealand in recent weeks. An ILI consultation rate of 64.7 was reported for week 40. This represents a decrease from rates reported in weeks 38 and 39 and approaches baseline levels. Laboratory analysis has identified the influenza A/Fujian/411/2002 (H3N2)-like virus as the predominant circulating strain. http://www.surv.esr.cri.nz/virology/influenza_weekly_update.php

Avian influenza

Thailand

Since the beginning of 2004, Thailand has reported 16 laboratory confirmed cases of human infection with avian influenza A (H5N1). Eleven of these have been fatal. On the 28th of September, Thai officials announced a probable case of human-to-human transmission in a family cluster of cases. Specimens from this cluster are being analysed at a WHO collaborating laboratory to determine if the genetic makeup of the virus has changed. There is no evidence that efficient and sustained human-to-human transmission is currently occurring in Thailand. For further information on the avian influenza outbreaks please consult the following websites:

NDSC: <http://www.ndsc.ie/DiseaseTopicsA-Z/AvianInfluenza/>

WHO: http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/

Northern Hemisphere influenza vaccine for the 2004/2005

The WHO has published its recommendations on the composition of influenza vaccines for use in the 2004-2005 Northern Hemisphere influenza season.

- an A/New Caledonia/20/99(H1N1)-like virus
- an A/Fujian/411/2002(H3N2)-like virus^a
- a B/Shanghai/361/2002-like virus^b

^a The currently used vaccine virus is A/Wyoming/3/2003. A /Kumamoto/102/2002 is also available as a vaccine virus.

^b Candidate vaccine viruses include B/Shanghai/361/2002 and B/Jilin/20/2003, which is a B/Shanghai/361/2002-like virus.

<http://www.who.int/csr/disease/influenza/vaccinerecommendations1/en/>
www.emea.eu.int

Weekly influenza reports and further information on influenza are available on the NDSC website:

<http://www.ndsc.ie/Publications/InfluenzaWeeklySurveillanceReport/>
<http://www.ndsc.ie/DiseaseTopicsA-Z/InfluenzaFlu/>