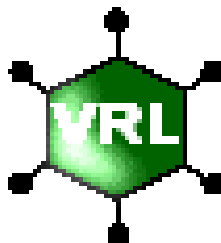


Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report



Week 14 2002

Report produced: 11/04/2002

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

Influenza Activity in Ireland

During week 14, the week ending the 7th of April 2002, the GP consultation rate for influenza-like illness (ILI) has decreased to the lowest level this season. Three ILI cases were reported from sentinel general practices, corresponding to a consultation rate of 5 per 100,000 population. Reports were received from 20 sentinel GPs, with 2 reporting ILI cases.

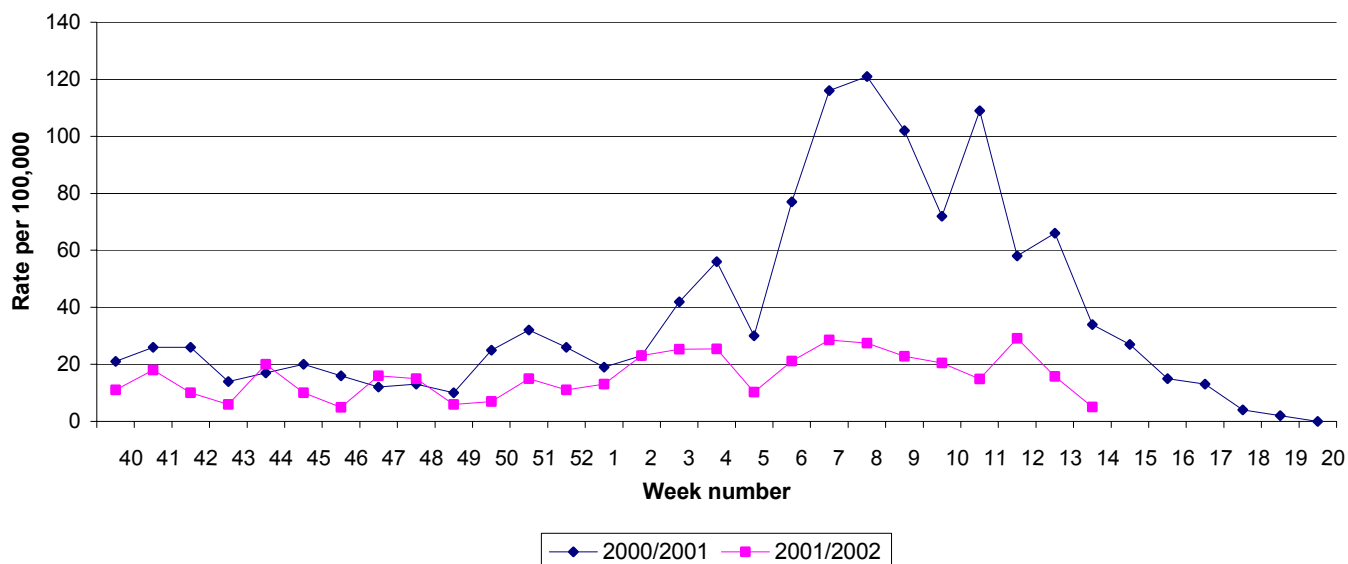


Figure 1: GP consultation rate for influenza-like illness per 100,000 population by report week, during the 2000/2001 and 2001/2002 influenza seasons.

Virological Data from the Virus Reference Laboratory (VRL)

The VRL have tested 617 respiratory specimens from non-sentinel specimens (hospitals and GPs) since the start of the influenza season. Six specimens were positive for RSV, bringing the total RSV cases detected this season to 196. Since October 2001, 2 adenoviruses, 1 parainfluenza type 3, 1 influenza B and 3 influenza A (unsubtyped) viruses have been identified from non-sentinel sources.

During week 14, 2 swabs were received from sentinel GPs; one was positive for influenza A (unsubtyped) virus. In week 13, 4 influenza A (unsubtyped) viruses were identified. To date this season, the VRL have received 228 swabs from sentinel GPs. Twenty-nine percent of the swabs were positive for influenza virus: 20 were positive for influenza A (unsubtyped), 2 were positive for influenza A (H1N1), 9 were positive for influenza A (H1N2), 33 were positive for influenza A (H3N2) and one was positive for influenza B.

Table 1: Sentinel influenza results by type, subtype and report week for 2001/2002

<i>Week number</i>	<i>Total swabs</i>	<i>Positive swabs</i>	<i>Percentage positive</i>	<i>A (unsubtyped)</i>	<i>A (H1N1)</i>	<i>A (H1N2)</i>	<i>A (H3N2)</i>	<i>B</i>
40	5	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0
41	4	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0
42	4	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0
43	2	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0
44	2	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0
45	6	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0
46	3	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0
47	10	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0
48	8	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0
49	6	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0
50	8	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0
51	9	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0
52	1	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0
1	7	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0
2	9	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0
3	12	4	33%	0	1	0	3	0
4	14	6	43%	0	0	0	6	0
5	15	3	20%	0	0	2	1	0
6	15	10	67%	1	1	1	7	0
7	16	5	31%	0	0	0	5	0
8	13	6	46%	0	0	3	3	0
9	14	8	57%	0	0	1	7	0
10	14	7	50%	4	0	2	1	0
11	9	4	44%	4	0	0	0	0
12	12	7	58%	6	0	0	0	1
13	8	4	50%	4	0	0	0	0
14	2	1	50%	1	0	0	0	0
Total	228	65	29%	20	2	9	33	1

Influenza Activity by Health Board/Authority

Influenza activity for weeks 13 and 14 will be reported from the Departments of Public Health in next weeks report. Influenza activity is based on sentinel GP ILI consultation rates, laboratory confirmed cases of influenza, hospital admissions data, and/or school absenteeism levels.

Influenza Activity in Northern Ireland

GP consultation rates for influenza and ILI are continuing to decrease in Northern Ireland. The combined rates for influenza and ILI for weeks 13 and 14 were 25.0 and 10.9 per 100,000 population, respectively. There were no influenza positive swabs detected during week 14.

Influenza Activity in England, Scotland and Wales

The PHLS has finished reporting influenza activity in the UK for the 2001/2002 influenza season. Surveillance of influenza activity, however, will continue and reports will be restarted if new activity emerges. If no further activity emerges the weekly influenza reports for next season will resume at the beginning of October.

Influenza Activity in Europe

During week 13, most of the surveillance networks participating in the European Influenza Surveillance Scheme (EISS) reported declining or unchanged low levels of influenza activity. The geographical spread of influenza ranged from none to regional, while the morbidity rates decreased in all the reporting countries. Thirty-five percent of sentinel specimens tested positive for influenza. Influenza A was the dominant virus type detected across Europe.

Influenza Activity in Canada

Regions of Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan reported widespread influenza activity during week 13, and regions of 5 other provinces reported localised activity. Sentinel physicians reported 25 cases of ILI per 1000 patient visits, which is the expected rate for the time of year. Health Canada reported 409 positive tests for influenza A and 44 for influenza B. To date this season, the National Microbiology Laboratory have antigenically characterised 85 influenza B/Hong/Kong/22/01-like isolates, these viruses are antigenically different from the current vaccine strains, which is expected to provide limited cross-protection against these strains. All other influenza A and B isolates that have been antigenically characterised this season are similar to the current vaccine strains.

Influenza Activity in the United States

The overall proportion of patient visits to sentinel physicians for ILI during week 13 was 1.6%, which is below the national baseline. One state and territorial health department reported widespread influenza activity, 13 reported regional activity, 29 reported sporadic activity and 3 reported no influenza activity. The WHO and NREVSS laboratories reported 21 influenza A (H3N2), 1 influenza A (H1N1), 59 influenza A (unsubtyped) and 109 influenza B viruses during week 13.

Influenza Activity Worldwide

During week 13, no influenza activity was reported in Argentina. Localised activity was reported in Australia, with an outbreak among elderly residents of a nursing home. In the Russian Federation, regional influenza activity was reported, with epidemics continuing in 4 cities.

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