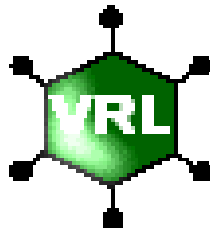


Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report



Week 8 2002

Report produced: 28/02/2002

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

Influenza Activity in Ireland

During week 8, the week ending the 24th of February 2002, the GP consultation rate for influenza-like illness (ILI) has decreased slightly. Fifteen ILI cases were reported from sentinel general practices, corresponding to a consultation rate of 26 per 100,000 population. Reports were received from 24 sentinel GPs, with 12 reporting ILI cases. The GP consultation rate for ILI has been updated for week 7, to 29 per 100,000.

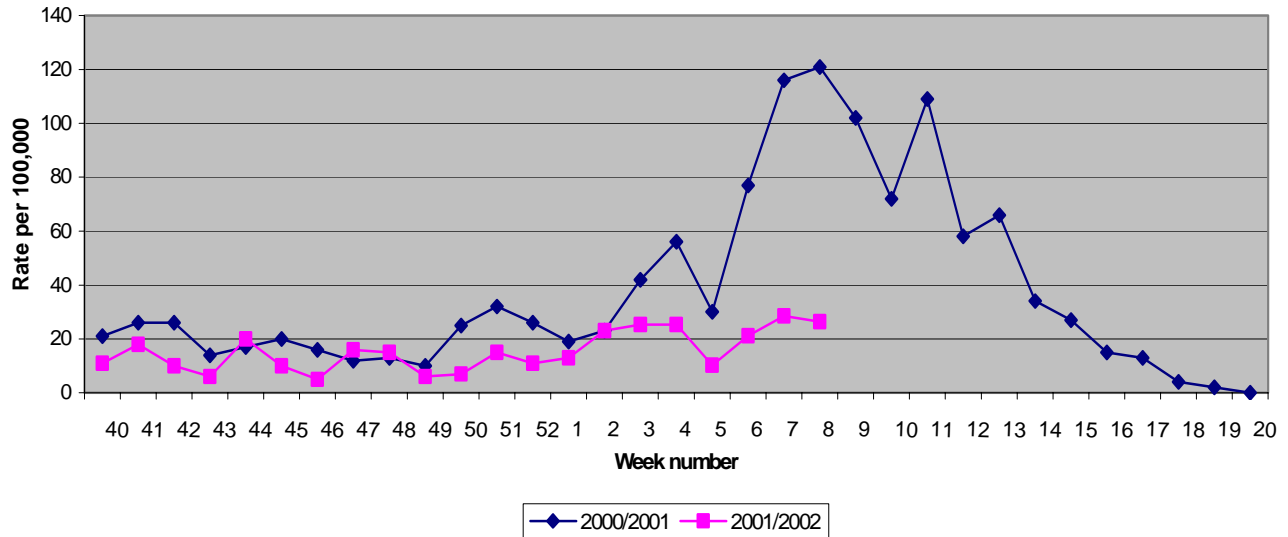


Figure 1: GP consultation rate for influenza-like illness per 100,000 population by report week, during the 2000/2001 and 2001/2002 influenza seasons.

Virological Data from the Virus Reference Laboratory (VRL)

During week 8 2002, 12 swabs were received from sentinel GPs, 3 of these were positive for influenza A (unsubtyped). To date this season, there have been no laboratory confirmed cases of the new strain of influenza, A (H1N2) or influenza B in Ireland.

The VRL have tested 517 respiratory specimens from non-sentinel specimens (hospitals and GPs), since the start of the influenza season. During week 8, 12 specimens were positive for RSV, bringing the total RSV cases detected this season to 165. No influenza viruses have been isolated from non-sentinel specimens.

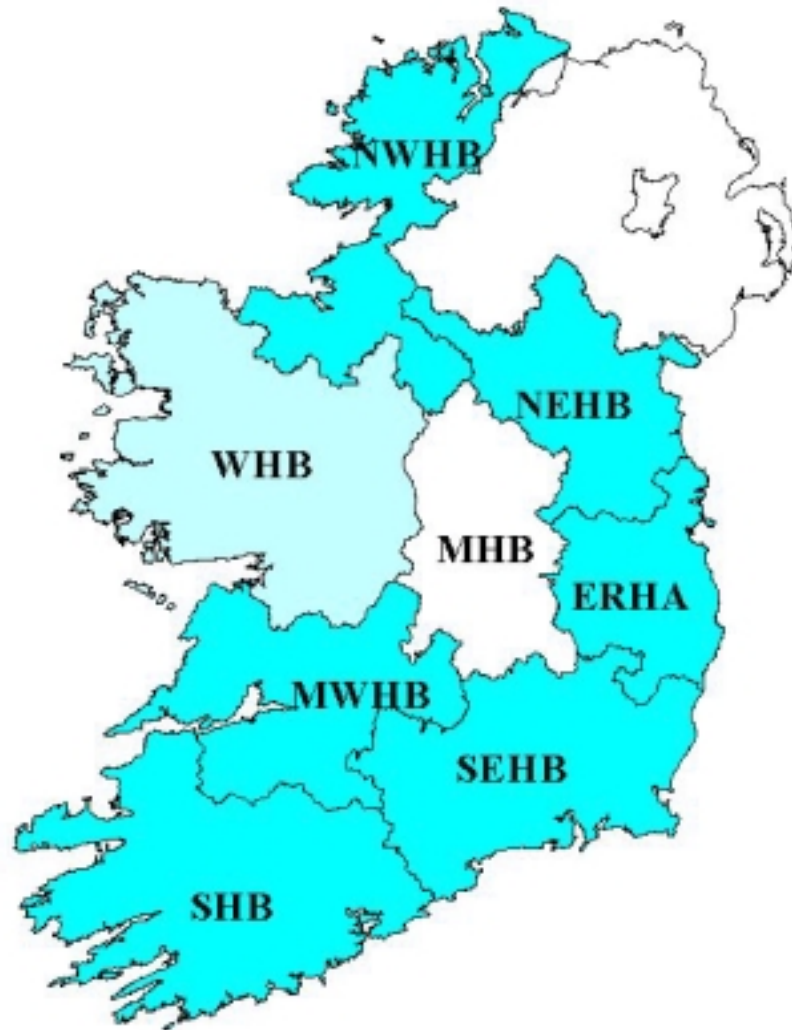
Table 1: Sentinel influenza results by type, subtype and report week for 2001/2002

Week number	Number of swabs	Percentage Positive	Influenza A (unsubtyped)	Influenza A (H1N1)	Influenza A (H3N2)	Influenza B
40	5	0%	0	0	0	0
41	4	0%	0	0	0	0
42	4	0%	0	0	0	0
43	2	0%	0	0	0	0
44	2	0%	0	0	0	0
45	6	0%	0	0	0	0
46	3	0%	0	0	0	0
47	10	0%	0	0	0	0
48	8	0%	0	0	0	0
49	6	0%	0	0	0	0
50	8	0%	0	0	0	0
51	9	0%	0	0	0	0
52	1	0%	0	0	0	0
1	7	0%	0	0	0	0
2	9	0%	0	0	0	0
3	12	33%	0	1	3	0
4	14	43%	0	0	6	0
5	15	20%	1	1	1	0
6	16	69%	8	0	3	0
7	15	20%	3	0	0	0
8	12	25%	3	0	0	0
Total	168	18%	15	2	13	0

Influenza Activity by Health Board/Authority

Influenza activity for week 7 (week ending the 17th of February 2002) was reported from the Departments of Public Health. Influenza activity is based on sentinel GP ILI consultation rates, laboratory confirmed cases of influenza, hospital admissions data, and/or school absenteeism levels. During week 7, six health boards reported sporadic activity and one reported no activity.

Influenza Activity - Week 7



Influenza Activity in Northern Ireland

The GP consultation rate for combined influenza and ILI increased to a rate of 38.8 per 100,000 in week 8. One isolation of influenza A (unsubtyped) was detected from a hospital paediatric case. Since the beginning of the influenza season, 4 influenza A (H3) and one influenza A (unsubtyped) viruses have been detected in hospitalised paediatric cases. One influenza A (H3) and one influenza A (H1) viruses have been detected through the sentinel surveillance scheme, both during week 7.

Influenza Activity in England, Scotland and Wales

During week 8, the GP consultation rates for influenza and ILI have decreased in England and Wales, to rates of 25 and 5 per 100,000, respectively. In Scotland, the GP consultation rate for ILI remained little changed, with a rate of 28 per 100,000. Since week 40 2001, 67 isolates of influenza A (H3N2) and 91 isolates of influenza A (H1) have been detected by the ERNVL Reference Laboratory.

Influenza Activity in Europe

During week 7, influenza activity levels ranged from none to widespread. Widespread activity was reported in France, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland. With the exception of Norway, weekly clinical morbidity rates were decreasing in all the countries that reported widespread activity during week 7. Regional activity was reported in Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden. Local outbreaks were reported in Romania and Slovenia, and sporadic activity was reported in the Czech Republic and Denmark. No influenza activity was reported in Poland and the Slovak Republic. Influenza A (H3N2) is the dominant circulating virus across most of Europe.

Influenza Activity in Canada

During week 7, sentinel physicians reported 25 cases of ILI per 1000 patient visits, which is below the expected rate for the time of year. Health Canada received 2418 reports of laboratory tests for influenza: 18% were positive for influenza A and 3% were positive for influenza B. The National Microbiology Laboratory antigenically characterised 131 influenza isolates to date this season: 90 were A (H3N2); 2 were A (H1); 3 were B/Sichuan/379/99-like, and 36 were B/Hong Kong/22/01-like. Of the 2 influenza A (H1) isolates, one was influenza A (H1N2).

Influenza Activity in the United States

In the US during week 7, the overall proportion of patient visits to sentinel physicians for ILI was 3.6%, which is above the national baseline. Thirteen state and territorial health departments reported widespread influenza activity, 22 reported regional activity, 12 reported sporadic activity, and one reported no activity. In week 7, 174 influenza A (H3N2), 328 influenza A (unsubtyped), and 5 influenza B viruses were identified.

Influenza Activity Worldwide

During week 7, no influenza activity was reported in Argentina, Mexico and Chile. Sporadic influenza activity was reported in Israel, with B/Victoria/2/87-like virus isolated from 7 children aged 10 to 17 years of age. Widespread influenza activity was reported in Japan and the Russian Federation. In the Russian Federation, influenza activity was mainly associated with influenza B virus.

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