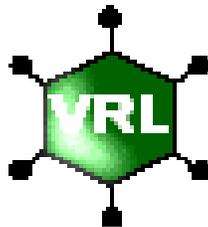


# Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report



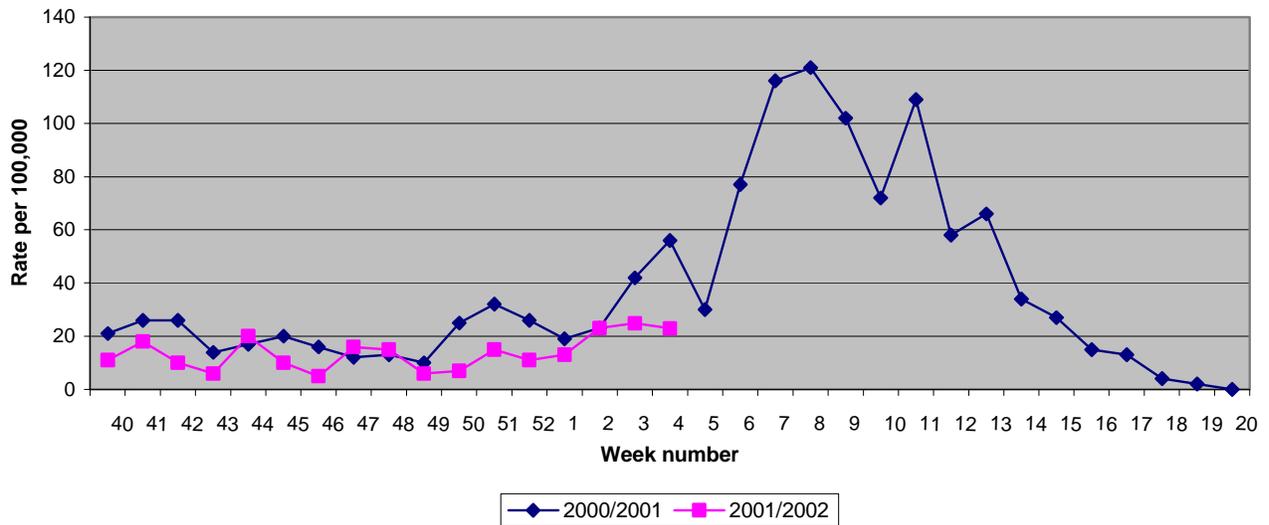
**Week 4 2002**

**Report produced: 30/02/2002**

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

### Influenza Activity in Ireland

During week 4, week ending the 27<sup>th</sup> of January 2002, 16 cases of influenza-like illness (ILI) were reported from sentinel general practices. This corresponds to a consultation rate of 23 per 100,000 population. Reports were received from 23 sentinel GPs, with 30% of them 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)

During week 4 2002, the VRL received 14 swabs from sentinel GPs. Influenza A was detected in 5 swabs (the subtyping results are pending). Data for week 3 has been updated, 12 swabs were tested for influenza virus. Three were positive for influenza A (H3N2) and one was positive for influenza A (H1N1).

Between week 40 2001 and week 4 2002, the VRL have tested 360 respiratory specimens from non-sentinel sources (hospitals and GPs). Seventeen RSV cases were detected during week 4. No influenza viruses have been isolated from non-sentinel sources this season.

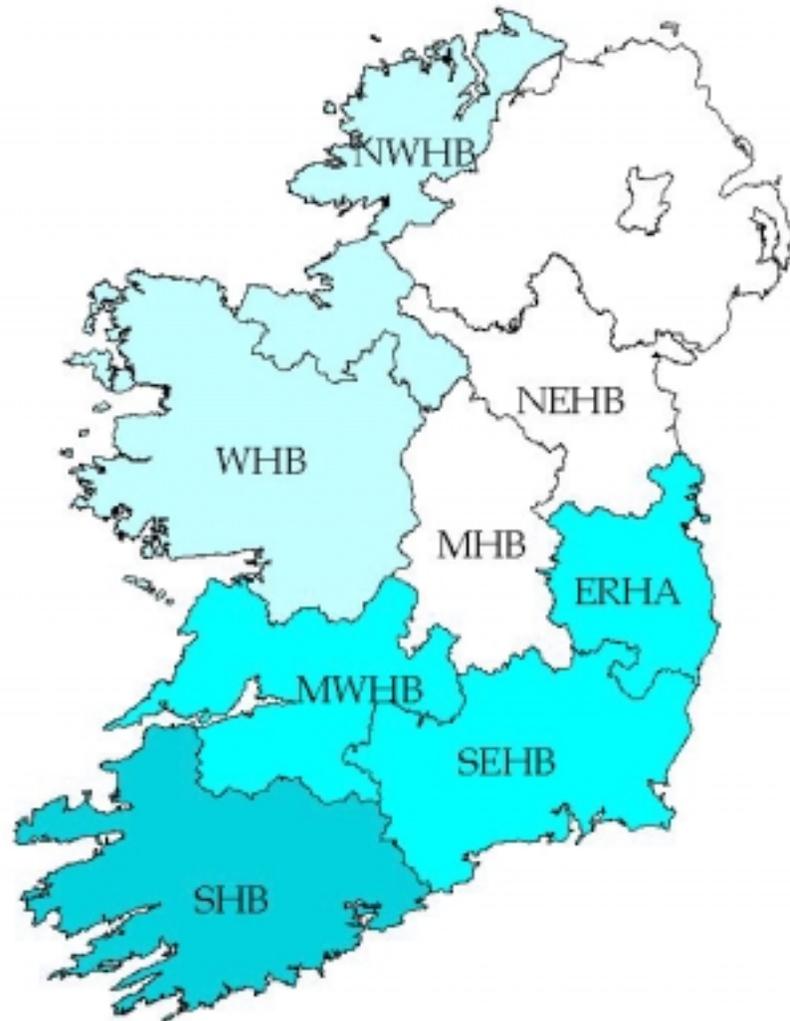
**Table 1: Sentinel influenza results by type, subtype and report week for 2001/2002**

<i>Week number</i>	<i>Number of swabs</i>	<i>Percentage Positive</i>	<i>Influenza A (unsubtyped)</i>	<i>Influenza A (H1N1)</i>	<i>Influenza A (H3N2)</i>	<i>Influenza B</i>
40	5	0%				
41	4	0%				
42	4	0%				
43	2	0%				
44	2	0%				
45	6	0%				
46	3	0%				
47	10	0%				
48	8	0%				
49	6	0%				
50	8	0%				
51	9	0%				
52	1	0%				
1	7	0%				
2	9	0%				
3	12	33%		1	3	
4	14	36%	5			
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>

**Influenza Activity by Health Board/Authority**

Influenza activity for week 3 (week ending the 20<sup>th</sup> of January 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 3, one health board reported localised activity, 3 reported sporadic activity, and 2 reported no influenza activity.

# Influenza Activity - Week 3



### **Influenza Activity in Northern Ireland**

The GP consultation rate for combined influenza and ILI decreased from a rate of 12.4 per 100,000 in week 3 to 6.6 per 100,000 in week 4. All swabs from sentinel GPs were negative for influenza virus. One positive influenza A swab was detected from a hospital in-patient during week 4. This is the second positive swab of influenza A detected in Northern Ireland since the start of the season.

### **Influenza Activity in England, Scotland and Wales**

GP consultations for influenza and ILI have increased to 38 per 100,000 during week 3, in England. In Scotland, the GP consultation rate for ILI remained little changed, with a rate of 37 per 100,000 in week 3. The GP consultation rate in Wales has also increased to 6.5 per 100,000 during week 3. The ERNVL detected 8 influenza A (H1N1) and 11 influenza A (H3N2) viruses during week 3. Hospital microbiology laboratories also reported 9 influenza A and 2 influenza B viruses during week 3. Characterisation of 13 isolates of influenza A (H1N1) has shown them to be antigenically related to the influenza A (H1N1) New Caledonian-like strain. Six isolates of influenza A (H3N2) were antigenically related to the influenza A (H3N2) Panama-like strain. Both of these strains are covered by the current season's vaccine.

### **Influenza Activity in Europe**

During week 3, influenza activity remained at a moderate or medium intensity in Europe. Belgium, France, Spain and Switzerland reported an increase in clinical morbidity rates with widespread or regional geographical spread. Localised activity was reported in the Netherlands, Italy and Portugal. The Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Norway, Slovenia and Sweden all reported sporadic activity. No influenza activity was reported in Poland, Romania, and Slovakia. Influenza A (H3N2) is the dominant virus in most countries, but the subtype A (H1N1) and type B are also being isolated.

### **Influenza Activity in Canada**

Sentinel physicians reported 20 ILI cases per 1000 patient visits during week 3. Health Canada received 1661 reports of laboratory tests for influenza: 199 were positive for influenza A and 7 were positive for influenza B. All influenza A viruses characterised to date are similar to the strains included in this season's vaccine. One influenza B strain (influenza B/Hong Kong/22/01-like virus) is antigenically different from the vaccine strain, the current vaccine is expected to provide limited cross protection against this antigenic variant.

### **Influenza Activity in the United States**

During week 3, 4 state and territorial health departments reported widespread influenza activity, 11 reported regional activity and 1 state reported no influenza activity. The overall proportion of patient visits to sentinel physicians was 2.2%, which is above the national baseline. During the same week, 13.9% of respiratory specimens were positive for influenza, one influenza A (H1N1), 51 influenza A (H3N2), 114 influenza A (unsubtyped) and 1 influenza B viruses were isolated. The current vaccine covers all influenza viruses characterised this season.

**Influenza Activity Worldwide**

No influenza activity was reported in Iceland, Greece and Chile during week 3. Sporadic activity was reported in Austria, Hong Kong, Latvia, and The Balkans. Influenza A (H3N2) is the dominant virus type in Hong Kong. Localised influenza activity was reported in Australia and Finland, with influenza A (H3N2) being the dominant virus type. Regional influenza activity was reported in the Russian Federation, with epidemic thresholds for all population groups exceeded in 7 cities.

**This report was prepared by Lisa Domegan, Surveillance Scientist, NDSC.**