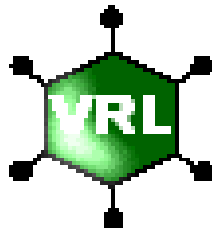


Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report



Week 1 2002

Report produced: 09/01/2002

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

Influenza Activity in Ireland

During week 1, week ending the 6th of January 2002, 5 cases of influenza-like illness (ILI) were reported from sentinel general practices. This corresponds to a consultation rate of 11 per 100,000 population. Reports were received from 25 sentinel GPs, with 4 reporting ILI cases. Data for weeks 51 and 52, 2001, has been updated. During week 51, 11 ILI cases were reported, corresponding to a rate of 15 per 100,000. During week 52, 8 ILI cases were reported, corresponding to a rate of 11 per 100,000.

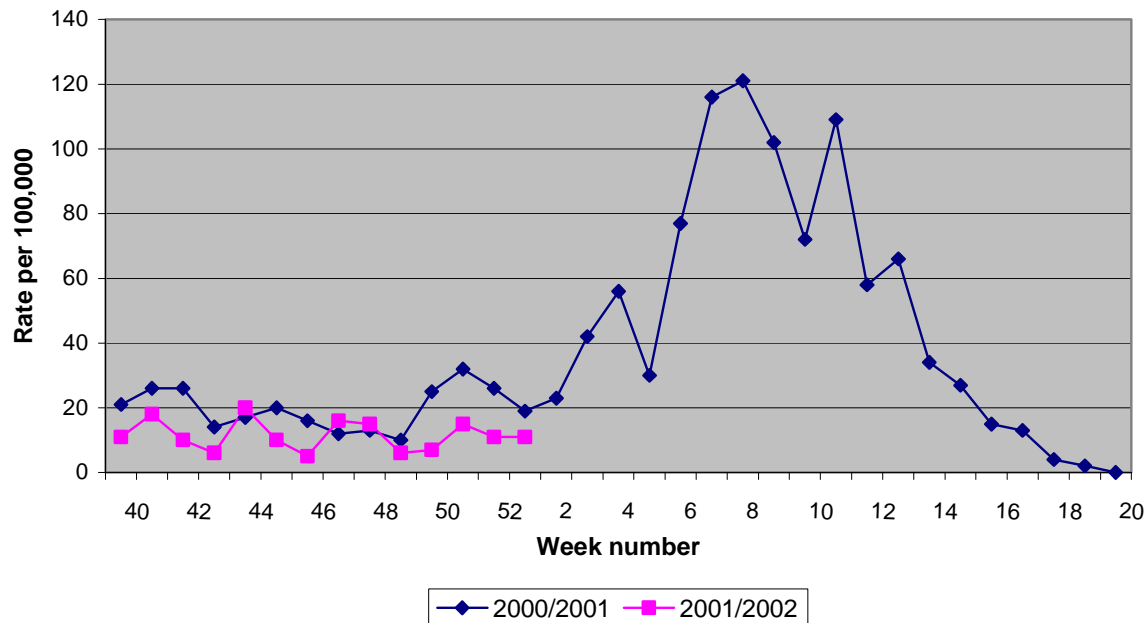


Figure 1: GP consultation rate for influenza-like illness per 100,000 population by report week, during the 2000/2001 and 2001/2002 influenza seasons.

Virological Data from the Virus Reference Laboratory (VRL)

During week 1, 2002, the VRL received 4 swabs from sentinel GPs. The results of three of these swabs were negative and one is pending. The results for weeks 51 and 52 have been updated. A total of 10 swabs were received from sentinel GPs during weeks 51 and 52, all of these were negative for influenza virus. Since the start of the 2001/2002 influenza season the VRL has received 69 swabs from sentinel GPs; influenza virus has not been detected in any of these swabs to date (table 1).

Between week 40 2001 and week 1 2002, the VRL have tested 248 respiratory specimens from non-sentinel sources (hospitals and GPs), 52 were positive for RSV and 1 was positive for parainfluenza type 3. Twenty-four RSV positive cases were identified during week 1. There has also been a noticeable rise in *Mycoplasma pneumoniae*, with 23, 34 and 33 positive serology tests during October, November and December 2001, respectively.

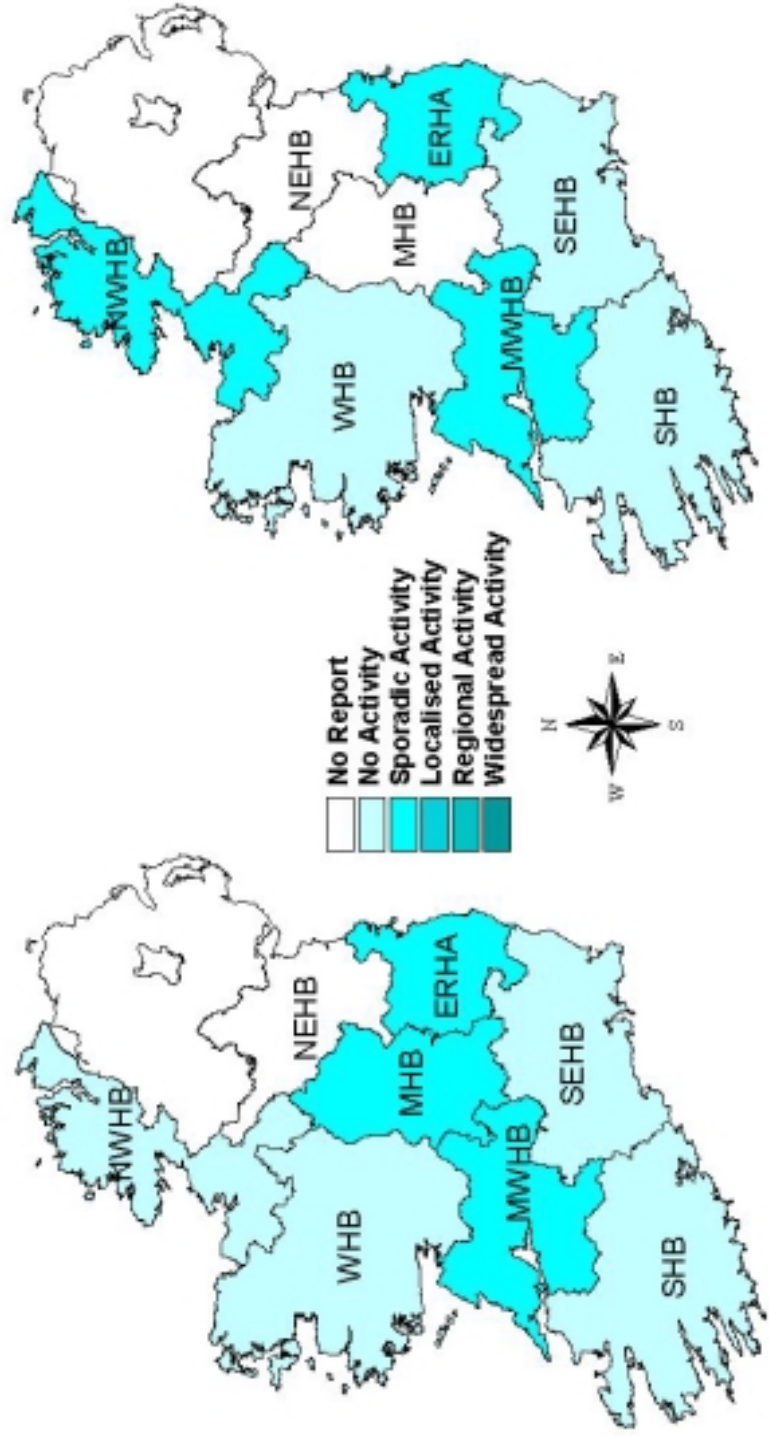
Table 1: Sentinel influenza results by type, subtype and report week for 2001/2002

| <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 | 5 | 0% | | | | |
| 50 | 6 | 0% | | | | |
| 51 | 9 | 0% | | | | |
| 52 | 1 | 0% | | | | |
| 1 | 4 | 0% | | | | |
| Total | 69 | | | | | |

Influenza Activity by Health Board/Authority

Influenza activity for weeks 51 and 52 (weeks ending the 23rd and 30th of December 2001, respectively) 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 51, three health boards (ERHA, MHB and the MWHB) reported sporadic influenza activity, and 4 (NWHB, SHB, SEHB, and the WHB) reported no influenza activity. During week 52, sporadic influenza activity was reported in the ERHA, MWHB, and NWHB. The SHB, SEHB and WHB all reported no influenza activity.

Influenza Activity



Week 52

Week 51

Influenza Activity in Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland, during week 1 2002, the GP consultation rate for ILI was 16 per 100,000 population. Influenza virus has not been isolated to date this season.

Influenza Activity in England, Scotland and Wales

In England, the GP consultation rate for influenza and ILI has decreased to 16 per 100,000 in week 52. In Scotland, the GP consultation rate for ILI increased to 34 per 100,000 in week 52. In Wales, the GP consultation rate for influenza and ILI remained unchanged at a rate of 1 per 100,000. During week 52, influenza A (H1N1) was detected in 2 hospital derived specimens by PCR. Antigenic characterization of 3 influenza isolates, this season, has shown them to be related to the influenza A (H3N2) Panama-like strain. Influenza A (H1N1) has also been detected in 5 specimens, one of which was antigenically related to the influenza A (H1N1) New Caledonia-like strain.

Influenza Activity in Europe

Little or no influenza activity was reported across Europe during week 52. Eleven networks reporting to the European Influenza Surveillance Scheme (EISS) reported no influenza activity. Switzerland and Norway reported sporadic influenza activity and France reported regional activity. Local outbreaks have been reported in France, Spain and Belgium. Influenza A was the dominant type of influenza virus in France and Norway. Influenza B was the dominant type in Switzerland. Six networks reported no dominant influenza type. Reports of RSV are increasing in France and Scotland, but decreasing in England. The influenza isolates detected and reported to EISS so far, resemble the strains in the influenza vaccine for this season.

Influenza Activity in Canada

During week 52, influenza activity remained limited in Canada, with most surveillance regions reporting no influenza activity. Sporadic activity was reported in a few regions in Manitoba and British Columbia. Sentinel physicians reported 24 cases of ILI per 1000 patient visits, which is below the expected rate for the time of year. Health Canada received 456 reports of laboratory tests for influenza: 3 were positive for influenza A and one was positive for influenza B. All influenza viruses characterised to date have been A/Panama/2007/99(H3N2)-like, a strain contained in this year's vaccine.

Influenza Activity in the United States

During week 52, the overall proportion of patient visits to sentinel physicians for ILI was 2.5%. One state and territorial health department reported widespread influenza activity, 3 reported regional activity, 42 reported sporadic activity and 3 reported no influenza activity. The WHO and NREVSS laboratories received 608 reports of laboratory tests for influenza: 5 were positive for influenza A (H3N2) and 5 were positive for influenza A (unsubtyped). The current vaccine covers all influenza viruses that have been antigenically characterised.

Influenza Activity Worldwide

In Hong Kong, sporadic influenza activity was reported during week 52. One influenza A (unsubtyped), 1 influenza A (H1N1), 7 influenza A (H3N2) and 1 influenza B viruses have been isolated in Hong Kong in week 52.