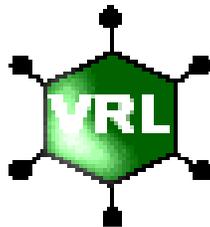


Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report



Week 43

Report produced:

31st October 2001

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

Influenza Activity in Ireland

During week 43 (ending 28 October 2001), sentinel general practices reported 2 cases of influenza-like illness (ILI). This corresponds to a GP consultation rate of 5 per 100,000 population. Reports were received from a total of 20 sentinel general practices, with only two of these reported ILI cases.

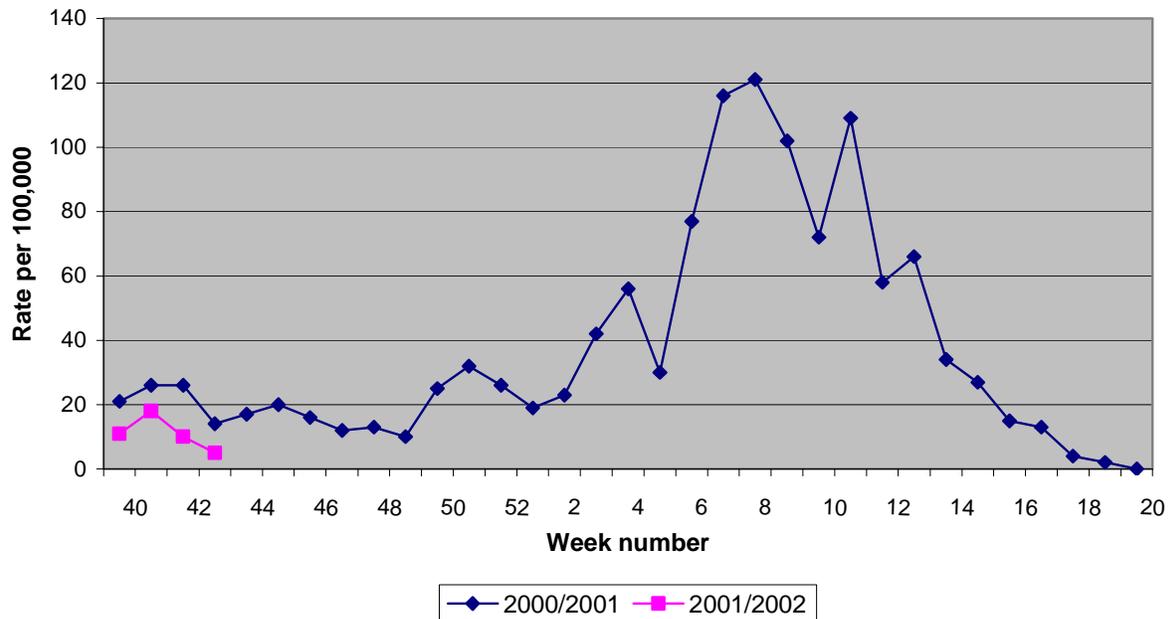


Figure 1: GP consultation rate for influenza-like illness per 100,000 population by report week, during the 2000/2001 and 2001/2002 influenza seasons.

Virological Data from the Virus Reference Laboratory

During week 43, the Virus Reference Laboratory received 2 swabs from sentinel general practices. One swab was negative for influenza virus and the results are pending on the second. Influenza virus has not been detected so far this season.

Influenza Activity in Northern Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales

Data from the Public Health Laboratory System (PHLS) are available on a fortnightly basis at present. Figures for England and Wales will be updated in the next report.

The scheme for Enhanced Surveillance of Influenza in Northern Ireland reported rates of 0 and 19.7 cases per 100,000 population for influenza and influenza-like illnesses (ILI) respectively for week 42 (ending 13 October). There have been no reports of influenza isolations or detection of influenza antigens so far this season.

The Scottish Flu Spotter scheme report for week 42 (ending 21 October) showed a consultation rate for ILI of 10 per 100,000 population, which continues at the lower level set for 'baseline activity' of 0-50 per 100,000 population. The first laboratory-confirmed case was reported with a single serological diagnosis of influenza B infection in a 66-year old male.

Influenza Activity in Europe

The European Influenza Surveillance Scheme (EISS) comprises 20 networks in 18 countries. In weeks 40 and 41, EISS received clinical reports of sporadic influenza activity from the Czech Republic. The other EISS networks reported no influenza activity. In week 42, a local outbreak of influenza was reported in Wales but otherwise there was no influenza activity in Belgium, Denmark, England, Germany, Ireland, Italy and Switzerland.

In the Czech republic, two cases of influenza A were reported in week 40 and one case of influenza B in week 41. In France, one case of influenza B in a hospitalised baby was confirmed by immunofluorescence in week 40 and four cases of influenza were detected using a rapid test in week 42.

Influenza Activity in the United States and Canada

In the United States, during week 42 (ending 20 October) 12 state and territorial health departments reported sporadic activity and 36 reported no influenza activity. The proportion of patient visits to sentinel physicians for ILI was 1.5% (national baseline is 1.9%). The percentage of all deaths attributable to influenza and pneumonia was 6.4%. Of the 463 specimens tested by WHO and NREVSS laboratories, no influenza viruses were identified.

In Canada, during the weeks ending 13 and 20 October, there were no reports of influenza activity or positive laboratory tests. Sentinel physicians reported 15 and 20 cases of ILI per 1000 patient visits. No laboratory reports were positive for influenza of the 515 tests in the first week and 628 tests in the second week. However, a laboratory outside the FluWatch Sentinel network confirmed the first outbreak of the 2001-2002 season in eastern Ontario, where 3 out of 4 cases tested positive for influenza A and 2 cases are pending viral culture.

Influenza Activity Worldwide

During week 43 (ending 27 October), sporadic ILI activity only was reported in Argentina and Hong Kong. In Argentina, 4 influenza A (not typed) and 3 influenza B isolates were detected.