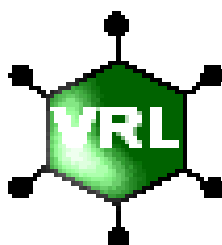


# Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report



**Week 4 2003**

**Report produced: 30/01/2003**

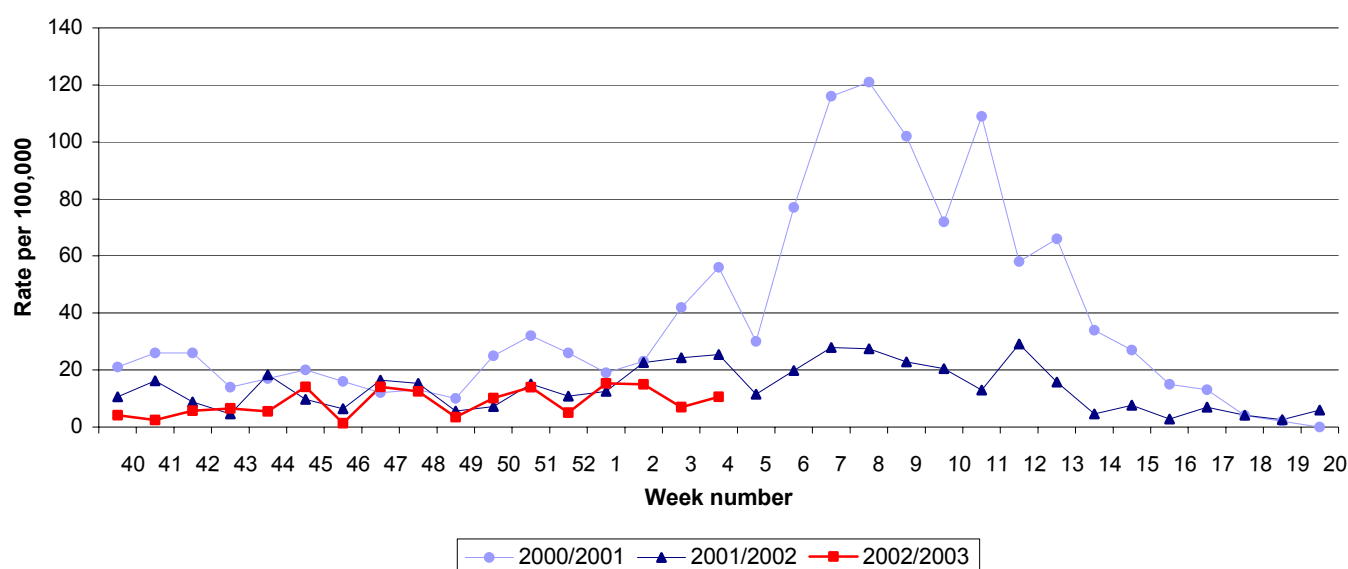
**This report is produced in collaboration with the Departments of Public Health**

## Summary

The sentinel GP consultation rate for influenza-like illness increased slightly during week 4 2003, but still remains at low levels. There were three positive detections of influenza virus: two influenza A and one influenza B.

## Clinical data from sentinel GPs

During week 4 2003 (the week ending the 26<sup>th</sup> of January 2003), 7 influenza-like illness (ILI) cases were reported from sentinel general practices, corresponding to an ILI consultation rate of 10.52 per 100,000 population. The consultation rate has increased from the rate of 6.96 per 100,000 in week 3 2003. Thirty of the 34 (88.23%) sentinel practices reported during week 4 2003, with 6 reporting ILI (figure 1).



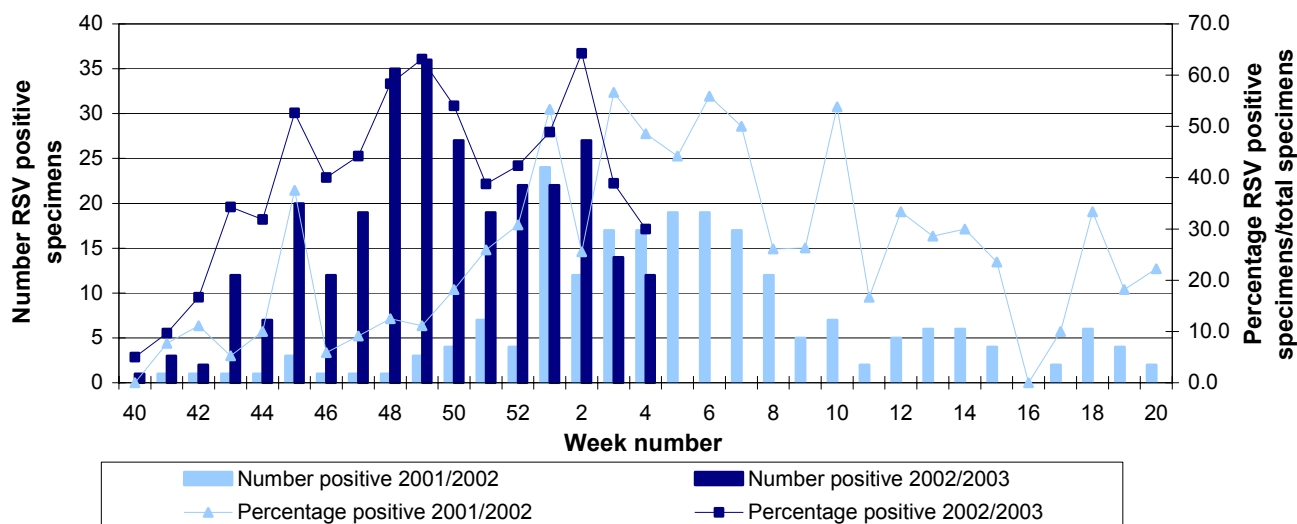
**Figure 1:** GP consultation rate for influenza-like illness per 100,000 population by report week, during the 2000/2001, 2001/2002 and 2002/2003 influenza seasons.

## Virological data

During week 4, the National Virus Reference Laboratory (NVRL) received 15 swabs from sentinel GPs, one was positive for influenza A (H3N2) and one for influenza B (table 1). Forty respiratory specimens from non-sentinel sources (mainly hospitals) were referred to the NVRL during week 4, 2 specimens were positive for Adenovirus, one was positive for parainfluenza virus type 3 and one was positive for influenza A (unsubtyped). Twelve (30.0%) respiratory non-sentinel specimens were positive for respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), a decrease in the percentage positive specimens from previous weeks. Since the start of the 2002/2003-influenza season, 278 (42.0%) of 662 respiratory specimens were positive for RSV. This is compared to 98 (27.2%) of 360 respiratory specimens positive for RSV during the same period in the 2001/2002 influenza season (RSV; figure 2).

**Table 1: Sentinel influenza results by type, subtype and report week for 2002/2003**

<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	4	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0
41	1	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0
42	4	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0
43	3	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0
44	3	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0
45	7	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0
46	1	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0
47	3	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0
48	6	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0
49	3	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0
50	5	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0
51	8	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0
52	4	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0
1	7	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0
2	11	1	9.1%	0	0	0	0	1
3	8	1	12.5%	0	0	0	1	0
4	15	2	13.3%	0	0	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>



**Figure 2:** Number and percentage of non-sentinel RSV positive specimens detected during the 2001/2002 and 2002/2003 influenza seasons.

**Influenza activity by health board/authority**

Influenza activity is reported on a weekly basis from the Departments of Public Health. Influenza activity is based on sentinel GP ILI consultation rates, laboratory confirmed cases of influenza, sentinel hospital admissions data, and/or sentinel school absenteeism data. During week 3, 7 health boards reported no influenza activity and one (NEHB) reported sporadic influenza activity.

### **Influenza activity in Northern Ireland**

During week 4 2003, 22 of the 24 sentinel GPs reported, representing 7.9% of the population. The combined rate for influenza and ILI was 39.5 per 100,000. One influenza B virus was detected in a one-year-old hospitalised child.  
<http://www.cdscni.org.uk/>

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

In England, GP consultations for ILI changed little from a rate of 20.9 per 100,000 in week 3 to a rate of 23.6 per 100,000 in week 4. In Wales, the GP consultation rate for ILI increased to 3.26 per 100,000 in week 4. In Scotland, the consultation rate decreased from a rate of 42.0 per 100,000 in week 3 to 31.0 per 100,000 in week 4. There were 11 positive detections of influenza viruses from specimens referred to the ERNVL in week 4: 7 influenza B and 4 influenza A (H3). All of the typed isolates reported so far this season are similar to the current vaccine strains.

[http://www.phls.co.uk/topics\\_az/influenza/fluactivity0203.htm](http://www.phls.co.uk/topics_az/influenza/fluactivity0203.htm)

### **Influenza activity in Europe**

During week 3, 7 networks reporting to the European Influenza Surveillance Scheme (EISS) reported no influenza activity and 9 networks reported sporadic activity. The Italian and Spanish networks reported localised activity and the French network reported regional activity. The percentage of sentinel specimens positive for influenza was 10.9% (an increase from 8.7% in week 2). Influenza B was the dominant virus type circulating in southwest Europe in week 3. Norway reported that both influenza A and B were co-circulating, whilst Germany and Switzerland reported that influenza A was dominant. <http://www.eiss.org/index.cgi>

### **Influenza activity in Canada**

During week 4, localised influenza activity was reported in Quebec and central and southwest Ontario; with 10 other provinces reporting sporadic or no influenza activity. Sentinel physicians reported 16 cases of ILI per 1000 patient visits, which is below the expected rate for the time of year. Health Canada received 1299 reports of laboratory tests for influenza: 112 influenza A detections and one influenza B.

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pphb-dgsp/fluwatch/index.html>

### **Influenza activity in the United States**

During week 3, the proportion of patient visits to sentinel providers for ILI was 1.5%, which is less than the national baseline. Three state and territorial health departments reported widespread influenza activity, 11 reported regional activity, 29 reported sporadic activity and 5 reported no influenza activity. The WHO and NREVSS laboratories reported 1414 specimens tested for influenza virus: 10 were positive for influenza A (H1), 3 for A (H3N2), 23 for A (unsubtyped) and 114 for influenza B

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/flu/fluvirus.htm>

### **Influenza activity Worldwide**

During week 3, no influenza activity was reported in Chile and Hungary. Sporadic activity was reported in Hong Kong, the Russian Federation, French Guiana and Tunisia. Localised influenza activity was reported in Israel and Finland.

<http://oms2.b3e.jussieu.fr/flunet/>

**This report was produced by Dr Lisa Domegan, NDSC.**