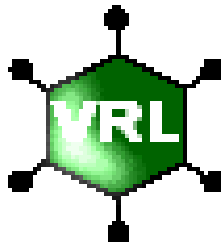


Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report



Week 3 2003

Report produced: 23/01/2003

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

Summary

The sentinel GP consultation rate for influenza-like illness remains at low levels and decreased during week 3 2003. There was one positive detection of influenza A (H3N2).

Clinical data from sentinel GPs

During week 3 2003 (the week ending the 19th of January 2003), 6 influenza-like illness (ILI) cases were reported from sentinel general practices, corresponding to an ILI consultation rate of 7.0 per 100,000 population. The consultation rate has decreased from the updated rate of 14.9 per 100,000 in week 2 2003. Thirty-one of the 34 (91.2%) sentinel practices reported during week 3 2003, with 4 reporting ILI (figure 1).

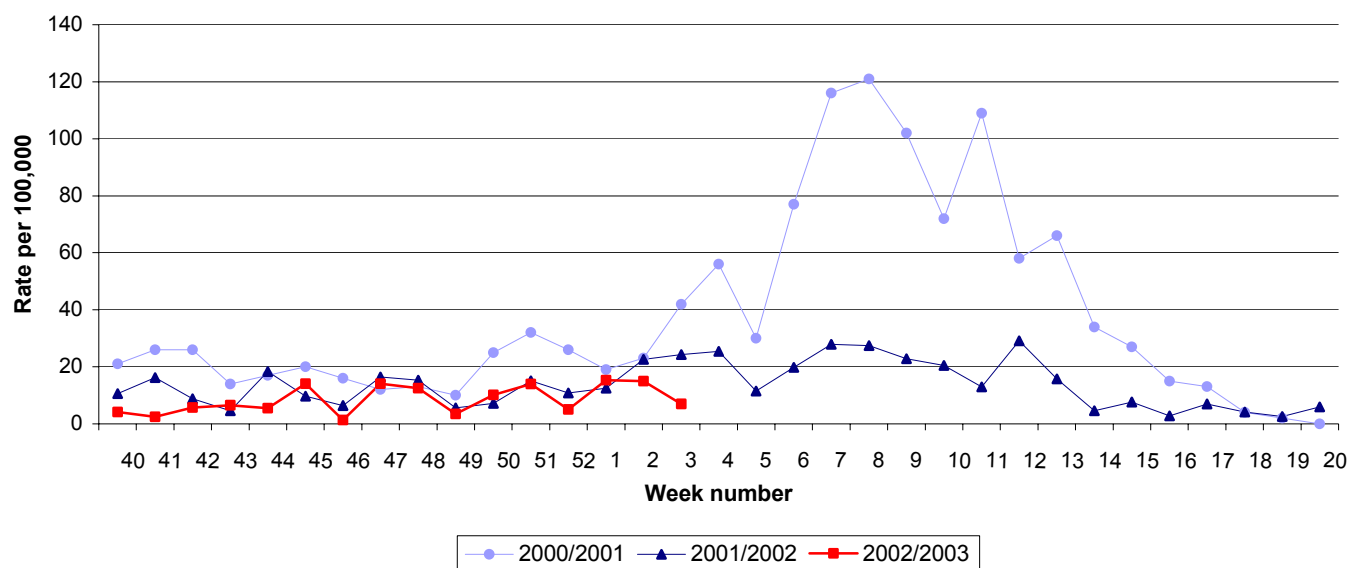


Figure 1: GP consultation rate for influenza-like illness per 100,000 population by report week, during the 2000/2001, 2001/2002 and 2002/2003 influenza seasons.

Virological data

During week 3, the National Virus Reference Laboratory (NVRL) received 8 swabs from sentinel GPs, one was positive for influenza A (H3N2) (table 1). Thirty-six respiratory specimens from non-sentinel sources (mainly hospitals) were referred to the NVRL during week 3, 14 (38.9%) 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, 266 (42.8%) of 622 respiratory specimens were positive for RSV. This is compared to 81 (24.9%) of 325 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
Total	78	2	2.6%	0	0	0	1	1

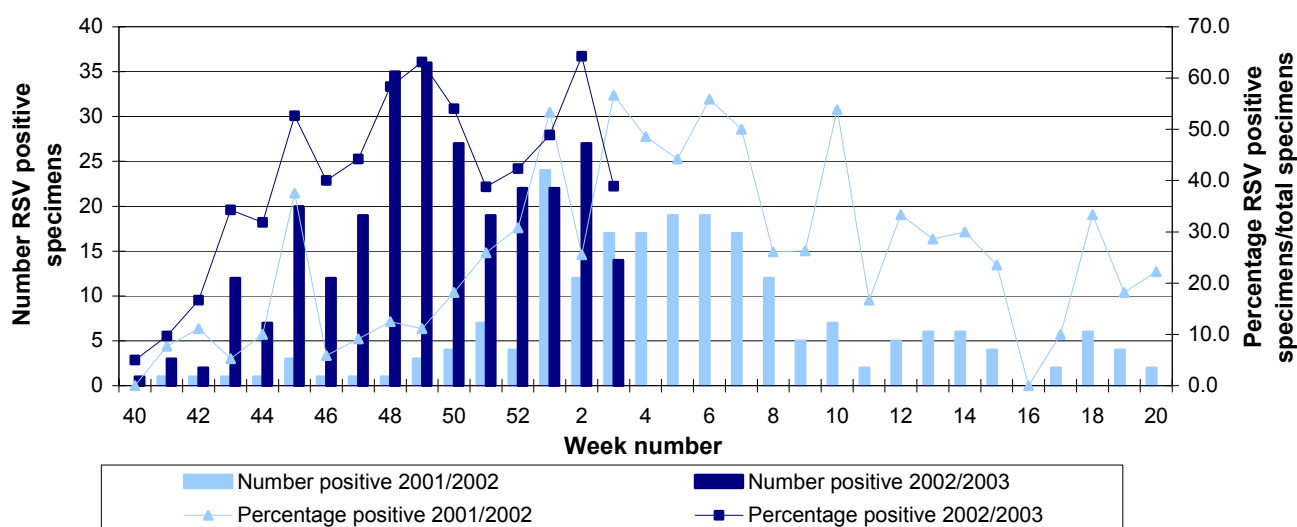


Figure 2: Number and percentage of non-sentinel RSV positive specimens detected during the 2001/2002 and 2002/2003 influenza seasons.

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 2, 4 health boards reported sporadic influenza activity and 4 reported no influenza activity (figure 3).

Week 2 2003 map of influenza activity

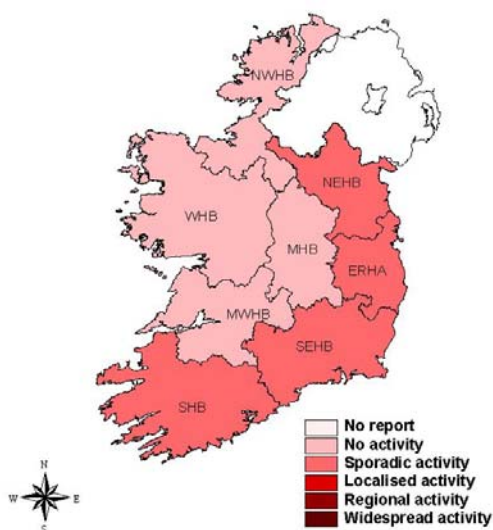


Figure 3: Map of influenza activity by health boards/authority during week 2 2003

Influenza activity in Northern Ireland

During week 3 2003, 23 of the 24 sentinel GPs reported, representing 8.4% of the population. The combined rate for influenza and ILI was 33.8 per 100,000. Influenza virus has not been detected this season either through sentinel or non-sentinel surveillance. <http://www.cdscni.org.uk/>

Influenza activity in England, Scotland and Wales

In England, GP consultations for ILI decreased from a rate of 30.6 per 100,000 in week 2 to a rate of 20.9 per 100,000 in week 3. In Wales, the GP consultation rate for ILI also decreased to 1.4 per 100,000 in week 3. In Scotland, the consultation rate changed little from a rate of 40.0 per 100,000 in week 2 to 42.0 per 100,000 in week 3. There were 18 positive detections of influenza viruses from specimens referred to the ERNVL in week 3: 17 influenza B and 1 influenza A (H3). All of the typed isolates reported so far this season are similar to the current vaccine strains, B/Hong Kong/330/01 and A/Panama/2007/99.

http://www.phls.co.uk/topics_az/influenza/fluactivity0203.htm

Influenza activity in Europe

During week 2, 10 networks reporting to the European Influenza Surveillance Network (EISS) reported no influenza activity and 8 reported sporadic activity. The Italian network reported localised activity and the French network reported regional activity. A total of 356 respiratory specimens tested for influenza were reported to EISS, 8.7% were positive for influenza virus. Overall influenza B was the dominant influenza type circulating in Europe in week 2. All of the influenza viruses characterised to date this season by EISS have been closely related to the 2002/2003 influenza vaccine strains. <http://www.eiss.org/index.cgi>

Influenza activity in Canada

Eleven provinces and territories reported sporadic or no influenza activity, localised activity was reported in Quebec and central and southwest Ontario, during week 2. Sentinel physicians reported 34 cases of ILI per 1000 patient visits, which is within the expected rates for the time of year. Health Canada received 1533 reports of laboratory tests for influenza; 159 (10.4%) were influenza A. All viruses identified this season are closely related to the current vaccine strains.

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

Influenza activity in the United States

During week 2, the proportion of patient visits to sentinel providers was 1.6%, less than the national baseline. Nine state and territorial health departments reported regional influenza activity, 33 reported sporadic activity and 7 reported no influenza activity. The WHO and NREVSS laboratories reported 1213 specimens tested for influenza virus, of which 67 (5.5%) were positive [1 A (H1), 1 A (H3N2), 23 A (unsubtyped) and 42 B]. <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/flu/fluvirus.htm>

Influenza activity Worldwide

No influenza activity was reported in the Russian Federation during week 2. Sporadic influenza activity was reported in French Guiana, Hong Kong, Argentina, Egypt and Finland. In Hong Kong influenza A (H3N2) and influenza B were the dominant circulating viruses. In Argentina, sporadic activity was associated with influenza A. Twenty-two positive detections of influenza A (H3N2) and 2 influenza B viruses were identified in Egypt. In Finland, sporadic activity was associated with 13 influenza B and 1 influenza A (H3N2) viruses. <http://oms2.b3e.jussieu.fr/flunet/>

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