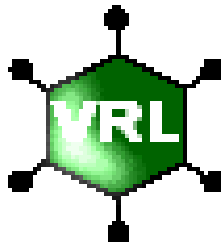


# Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report



**Week 2 2003**

**Report produced: 16/01/2003**

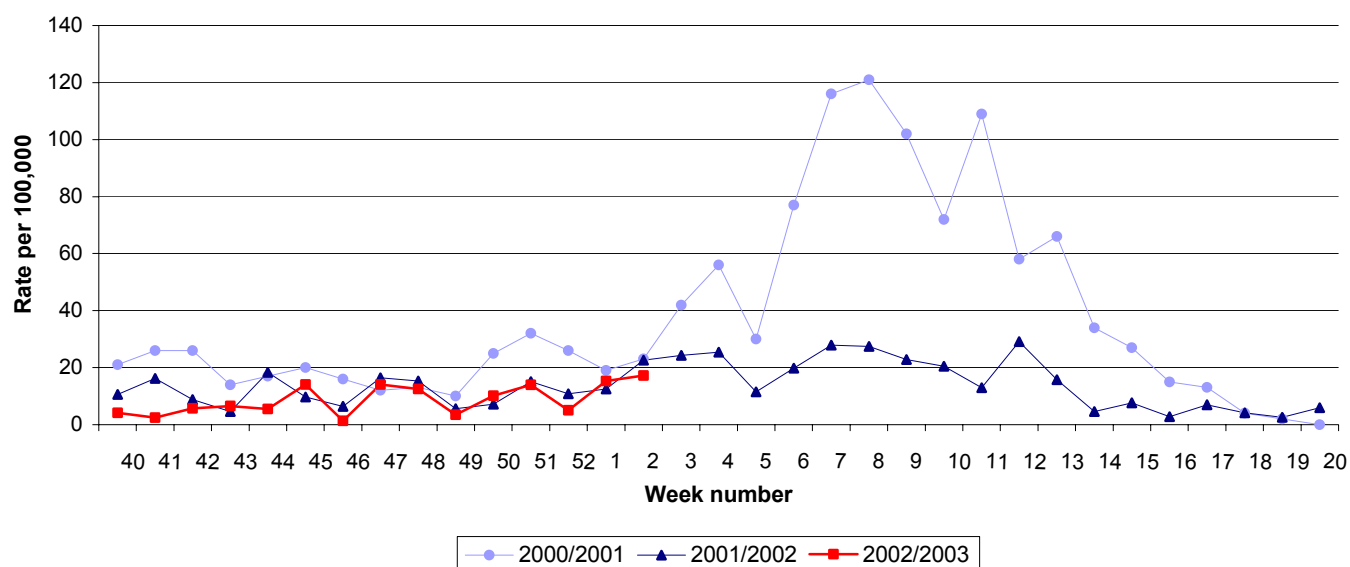
**This report is produced in collaboration with the Departments of Public Health**

## Summary

The sentinel GP consultation rate for influenza-like illness has increased over the last 2 weeks, however it still remains at low levels. The National Virus Reference laboratory has identified the first positive isolates of influenza virus this season, one influenza A and one influenza B.

## Clinical data from sentinel GPs

During week 2 2003 (the week ending the 12<sup>th</sup> of January 2003), 13 influenza-like illness (ILI) cases were reported from sentinel general practices, corresponding to an ILI consultation rate of 17.3 per 100,000 population. The consultation rate has increased from the updated rate of 15.3 per 100,000 for week 1 2003. Twenty-six (78.8%) of the 33 sentinel general practices reported during week 2, with 8 sentinel practices reporting ILI (figure 1).



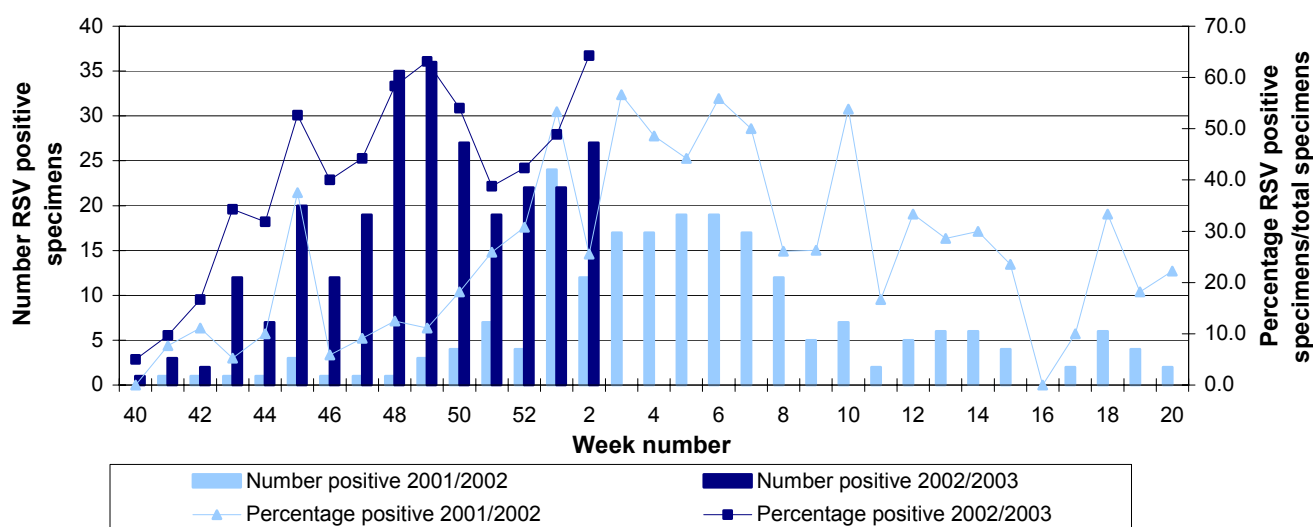
**Figure 1:** GP consultation rate for influenza-like illness per 100,000 population by report week, during the 2000/2001, 2001/2002 and 2002/2003 influenza seasons.

## Virological data

The National Virus Reference Laboratory (NVRL) has detected the first positive isolates of influenza virus this season. During week 2, the NVRL received 8 swabs from sentinel GPs, one was positive for influenza B (table 1). A swab taken on the 13<sup>th</sup> of January (week 3) tested positive for influenza A, the subtyping results of which are pending and will be included in the week 3 report. During week 2, 42 respiratory specimens from non-sentinel sources (mainly hospitals) were referred to the NVRL, 27 (64.3%) were positive for respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). The number of respiratory specimens positive for RSV peaked in week 49. Since the start of the 2002/2003-influenza season, 252 (43.0%) of 586 respiratory specimens were positive for RSV. This is compared to 64 (21.7%) of 295 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**

Week number	Total swabs	Positive swabs	Percentage positive	A (unsubtyped)	A (H1N1)	A (H1N2)	A (H3N2)	B
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	8	1	12.5%	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

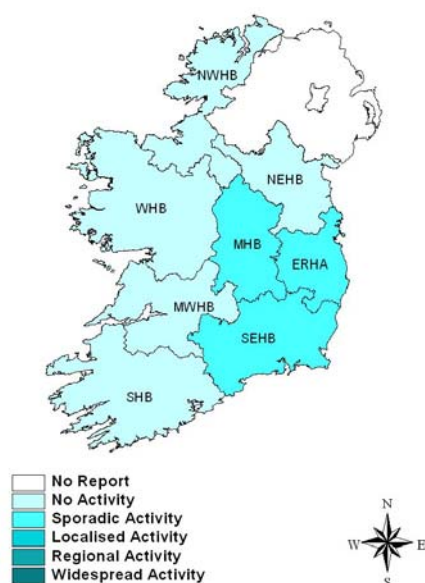


**Figure 2:** Number and percentage of non-sentinel RSV positive specimens detected during the 2001/2002 and 2002/2003 influenza seasons.

**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 1, 3 health boards reported sporadic influenza activity and 5 reported no influenza activity (figure 3).

### Influenza Activity - Week 1



**Figure 3:** Map of influenza activity by health boards/authority during week 1 2003

### Influenza activity in Northern Ireland

During week 2 2003, 21 of the 24 sentinel GPs reported representing 7.7% of the population. The combined rate for influenza and ILI was 43.4 per 100,000. Influenza virus has not been detected this season either through sentinel or non-sentinel surveillance. There has been no noticeable rise in other respiratory viral infections <http://www.cdscni.org.uk/>

### Influenza activity in England, Scotland and Wales

In England, GP consultations for ILI show little change from a rate of 27.2 per 100,000 in week 1 to a rate of 30.6 per 100,000 in week 2. In Wales, the GP consultation rate for ILI decreased to 3.7 per 100,000 in week 2. In Scotland, the consultation rate changed little from a rate of 41.0 per 100,000 in week 1 to 40.0 per 100,000 in week 2. There were 19 positive detections of influenza viruses from specimens referred to the ERNVL in week 2: 13 influenza B, 2 influenza A (H3), 3 influenza A (H3N2) and 1 influenza A (H1). Two of the influenza B detections were from Scotland and one was from Wales. All 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

Thirteen networks reporting to the European Influenza Surveillance Network (EISS) reported no influenza activity and 5 reported sporadic activity. The Italian network reported local activity and the French network reported regional activity for the Rhône-Alpes. Influenza B viruses were detected in South-west Europe and Belgium. Germany and Portugal reported influenza A (H3N2) positive specimens and France detected influenza A (H1N1). All of the influenza viruses detected this season by EISS have been closely related to the current vaccine strains.

<http://www.eiss.org/index.cgi>

### **Influenza activity in Canada**

During week 1, sentinel physicians reported 40 cases of ILI per 1000 patient visits. Influenza activity increased in 5 regions and 8 other provinces/territories reported no activity. Health Canada received 1294 reports of laboratory tests for influenza: 160 influenza A and 2 influenza B detections. All viruses antigenically characterised to date are closely related to the current vaccine strain. Other respiratory viruses are within expected levels for the time of year.

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

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

During week 1, the proportion of patient visits to sentinel providers for ILI was 2.0%, which is greater than the national baseline. Seven state and territorial health departments reported regional influenza activity, 31 reported sporadic activity, and 11 reported no influenza activity. The WHO and NREVSS laboratories reported 1147 specimens tested for influenza, of which 25 were positive [3 A (H1), 1 A (H3N2), 8 A (unsubtyped) and 13 B]. <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/flu/fluvirus.htm>

### **Influenza activity Worldwide**

No influenza activity was reported in Iceland, Argentina and the Russian Federation during week 1. Hong Kong reported sporadic influenza activity; 3 influenza A (unsubtyped), 12 influenza A (H3N2), and 18 influenza B viruses were detected. A localised outbreak of influenza B among military conscripts in North East Finland was reported during week 1. Israel also reported localised influenza activity associated with influenza B. <http://oms2.b3e.jussieu.fr/flunet/>

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