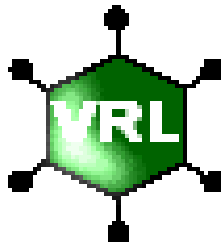


Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report



Week 42 2002

Report produced: 24/10/2002

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

Summary

All indicators of influenza activity remain at low levels, with no laboratory confirmed cases of influenza identified to date during the 2002/2003-influenza season.

Clinical data from sentinel GPs

During week 42 (week ending the 20th of October 2002), 4 influenza-like illness (ILI) cases were reported from sentinel general practices, corresponding to an ILI consultation rate of 5.7 per 100,000 population (figure 1). Twenty-four (72.7%) of the 33 sentinel general practices reported during week 42 with 3 reporting ILI cases.

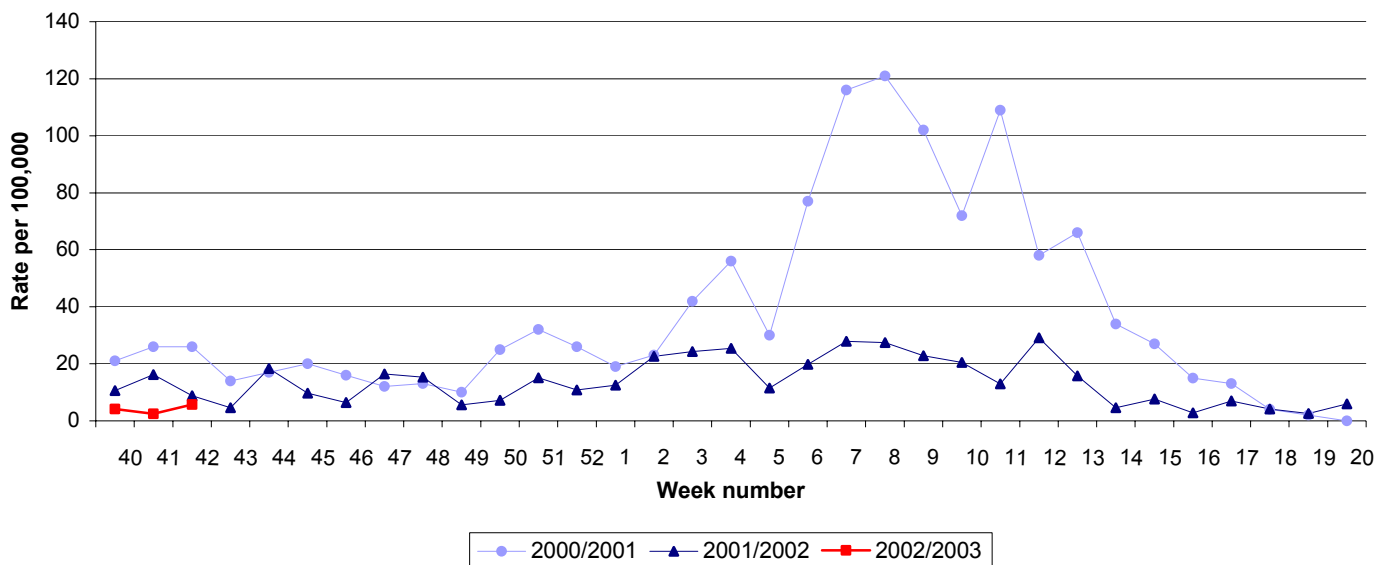


Figure 1: GP consultation rate for influenza-like illness per 100,000 population by report week, during the 2000/2001, 2001/2002 and 2002/2003 influenza seasons.

Virological data

The National Virus Reference Laboratory (NVRL) received 2 swabs from sentinel GPs during week 42, which were both negative for influenza virus (table 1).

The NVRL also tested 12 specimens from non-sentinel sources (GPs and hospitals) during week 42. Two were positive for respiratory syncytial virus (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	2	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0
Total	7	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0

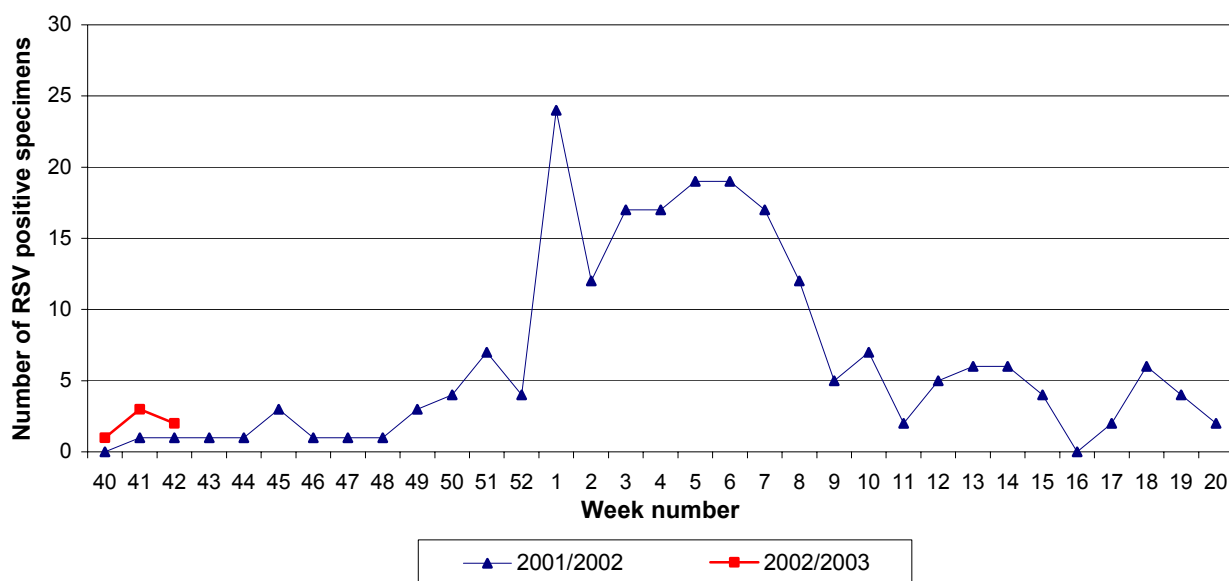


Figure 2: Non-sentinel RSV positive specimens detected during the 2001/2002 and 2002/2003 influenza seasons.

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, hospital admissions data, and/or school absenteeism data. To date this season there have been no indications of influenza activity in any of the health boards.

2002-2003 influenza vaccine

The EU recommendation for the influenza trivalent vaccine composition for the 2002-2003 season is as follows:

- A/Moscow/10/99 (H3N2)-like strain
- A/New Caledonia/20/99 (H1N1)-like strain
- B/Hong Kong/330/2001-like strain.

The complete text of the EU recommendations can be located at:

<http://www.emea.eu.int/pdfs/human/bwp/085202en.pdf>

Influenza activity in Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland during week 42, the combined influenza and ILI rate per 100,000 decreased to 19.0 per 100,000. No swabs were received from sentinel GPs during week 42 and there were no positive swabs from non-sentinel GPs or routine laboratory testing.

Influenza activity in England, Scotland and Wales

The weekly influenza surveillance data for week 42 was not available at the time of producing this report. During week 40 and 41, in England, Scotland and Wales, indicators of ILI remain within the range of baseline activity. In England, the GP consultation rate changed little from 12.3 per 100,000 in week 40 to 12.0 per 100,000

in week 41. The consultation rate for acute bronchitis remains within the expected range for the time of year. The GP consultation rate increased slightly from 1.4 per 100,000 in week 40 to 2.3 per 100,000 in week 41 in Wales. In Scotland, the consultation rate also remains at low levels at 12.0 per 100,000 in week 41, a slight increase from 4.0 per 100,000 in week 40. There have been no positive detections of influenza or RSV for any specimens referred to the ERNVL during weeks 40 or 41. Influenza has not been detected in NHS or PHLS laboratories and RSV numbers are low for the time of year.

Influenza activity in Europe

No influenza activity was reported in Norway, Denmark, Latvia, Romania, France, Portugal or Spain during week 41.

Influenza activity in Canada

In Canada, influenza activity remained at low levels during week 41; all influenza surveillance regions reported no influenza activity or did not report. Sentinel physicians reported 16 cases of ILI per 1000 patient visits during week 41, which is below the expected rate for the time of year. Health Canada received 629 reports of laboratory tests for ILI and all were negative. Detection of other respiratory viruses circulating in the Canadian population during week 41 was at low levels: RSV (2.0% of tests positive), parainfluenza viruses (4.3% of tests positive) and adenovirus (2.6% of tests positive).

Influenza activity in the United States

In the US, during week 41, the proportion of patient visits to sentinel providers for ILI was 1.2%, which is less than the national baseline of 1.9%. Nine state and territorial health departments reported sporadic influenza activity and 37 reported no influenza activity. During week 41, one of the 446 specimens tested by the WHO and NREVSS laboratories was positive for influenza A (H1N1).

Influenza activity Worldwide

During week 41, sporadic activity was reported in Argentina, Madagascar, Hong Kong, Brazil and Chile. In Hong Kong 6 influenza A (H3N2) and 2 influenza B viruses were isolated. In Brazil sporadic activity was associated with influenza B. Four influenza A (unsubtyped) and one influenza B viruses were detected in Argentina during week 41. In Madagascar one influenza A (H3N2) isolate was detected.

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