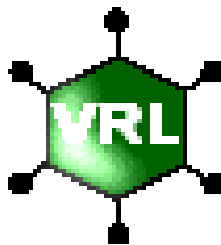


Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report



Week 41 2002

Report produced: 17/10/2002

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 41 (week ending the 13th of October 2002), 2 influenza-like illness (ILI) cases were reported from sentinel general practices, corresponding to an ILI consultation rate of 2.5 per 100,000 population (figure 1). Twenty-nine (87.9%) of the 33 sentinel general practices reported during week 41 with only 2 reporting ILI cases. The ILI consultation rate for week 40 has been updated to 4.2 per 100,000 population.

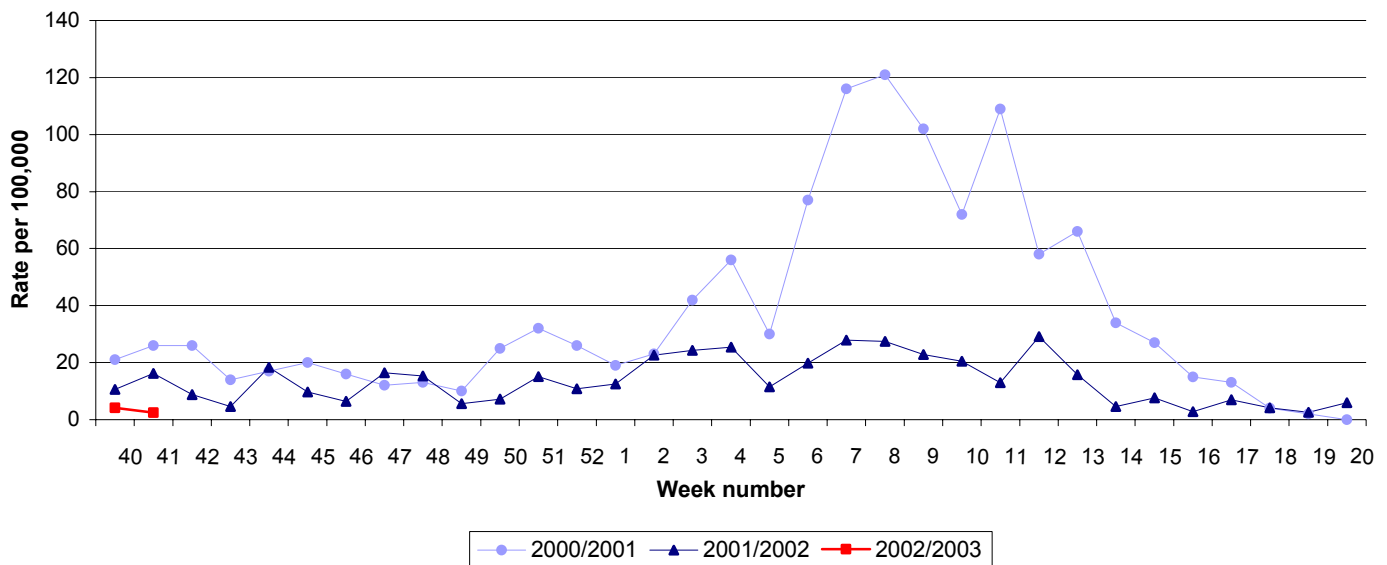


Figure 1: GP consultation rate for influenza-like illness per 100,000 population by report week, during the 2000/2001, 2001/2002 and 2002/2003 influenza seasons.

Virological data

The National Virus Reference Laboratory (NVRL) received 1 swab from sentinel GPs during week 41, which was negative for influenza virus (table 1).

The NVRL also identified 3 specimens positive for respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and one for parainfluenza type 3 virus (figure 2) from non-sentinel sources (GPs and hospitals) during week 41.

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
Total	5	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0

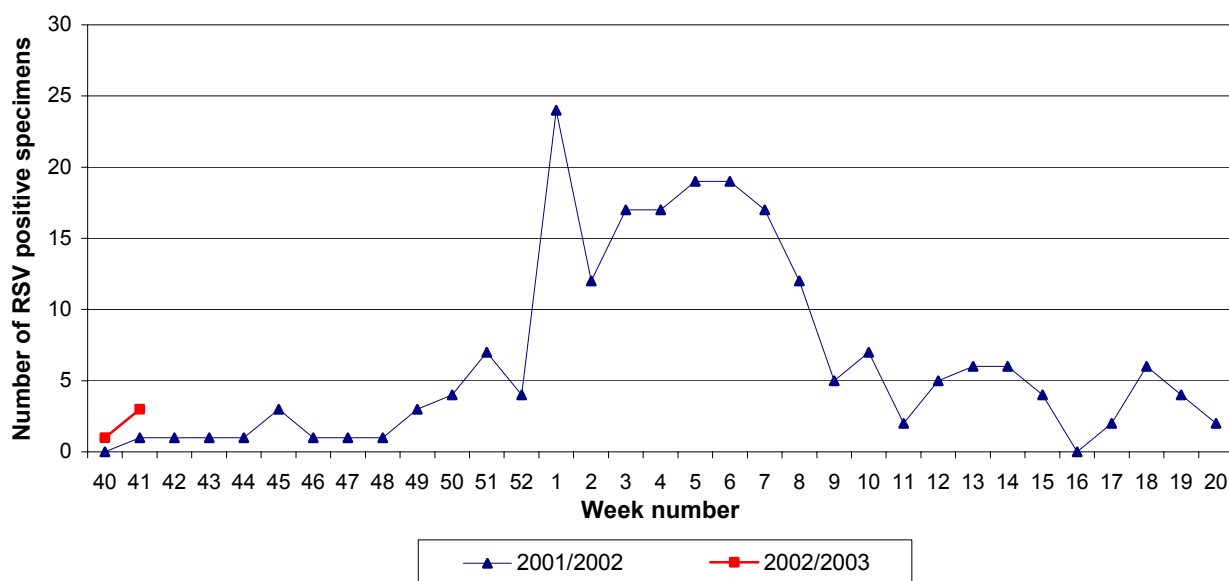


Figure 2: Non-sentinel RSV positive specimens detected during the 2001/2002 and 2002/2003 influenza seasons.

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. The first map of influenza activity will be produced in the forthcoming weeks.

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 41, the combined influenza and ILI rate per 100,000 increased slightly to 33.8 per 100,000. Data for week 40 has been updated and the combined rate for influenza and ILI is 31.7 per 100,000. No swabs were received from sentinel GPs during week 41 and there were no positive swabs from non-sentinel GPs or routine laboratory testing.

Influenza activity in England, Scotland and Wales

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 Latvia, Denmark, France, Romania, or Norway during week 40. Sporadic activity was reported in Poland in week 40. During September 2002, Spain reported its first case of influenza B, whilst Sweden and Norway each reported an imported case of influenza A.

Influenza activity in Canada

In Canada, influenza activity remained at low levels throughout the summer. During weeks 39 and 40, Health Canada received 1,041 reports of laboratory tests for influenza; none were positive for influenza A or B. Detection of other respiratory viruses circulating in Canada are also at very low levels during these weeks, including: RSV (1.4% of tests positive), parainfluenza viruses (2.8% of tests positive) and adenovirus (1.4% of tests positive).

Influenza activity in the United States

In the US, during week 40, 1.1% of patient visits to sentinel providers were due to ILI, which is less than the national baseline of 1.9%. The WHO and NREVSS laboratories reported 508 specimens tested for influenza viruses during week 40. No influenza isolates were identified. No influenza activity was reported in 39 states and New York City, 5 states reported sporadic activity and 6 states and Washington D.C. did not report during week 40. During September 2002, one influenza A (H3N2) virus and one influenza A (unsubtyped) virus were reported from Hawaii and Louisiana, respectively. Influenza B viruses were reported from Hawaii (1 isolate) and Tennessee (2 isolates).

Influenza activity Worldwide

During week 40, sporadic activity was reported in Argentina, Madagascar, Hong Kong, Brazil and Chile. In Hong Kong very low levels of influenza activity were reported. In Chile and Brazil sporadic activity was associated with influenza B.

This report was produced by Dr Lisa Domegan, Surveillance Scientist, NDSC.