

# Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report



**Week 43 2004**

**Week starting Monday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2004 &  
ending Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2004**

**Report produced: 28/10/2004**

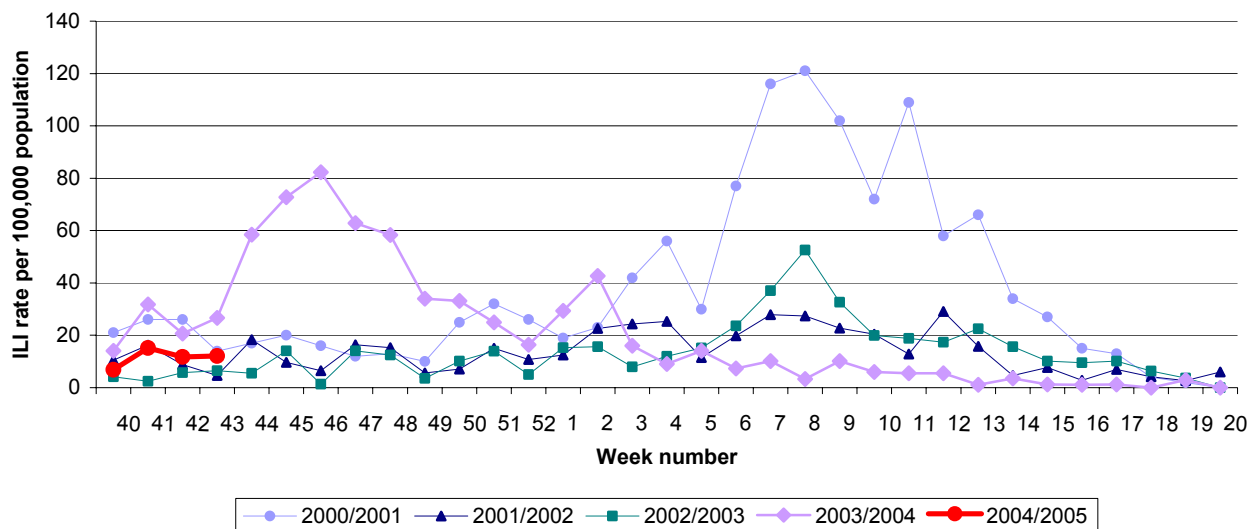
**This report is produced in collaboration with the Departments of Public Health**

## Summary

During week 43 2004, influenza activity remained at low levels in Ireland, with eight cases of influenza-like illness (ILI) reported by the sentinel GPs. Five sentinel swabs were submitted to the NVRL for testing. None were positive for influenza. The NVRL also tested 28 non-sentinel respiratory specimens from hospitals. Two samples from a single patient were positive for influenza A and nine samples tested positive for RSV. Subtyping of the week 43 and week 40 influenza A positives is underway.

## Clinical data

During week 43 (week ending 24<sup>th</sup> October 2004), eight ILI cases were reported by sentinel general practices, corresponding to an ILI consultation rate of 12.1 per 100,000 population (figure 1). This is an increase from the updated rate of 11.7 per 100,000 population for week 42. Seven of the ILI cases were in the 15-64 age group and one was in the over 65 age group. Returns were received from 25 out of 35 sentinel GP practices, giving a population coverage of 1.7% (61.6% of the total possible reporting GP patient population).



**Figure 1.** GP consultation rate for ILI per 100,000 population by week, during the 2000/2001, 2001/2002, 2002/2003, 2003/2004 & 2004/2005-influenza seasons.

## Virological data from the National Virus Reference Laboratory

During week 43, the National Virus Reference Laboratory (NVRL) received five swabs from sentinel GPs. All tested negative for influenza (table 1). The week 42 sentinel specimens all tested negative for RSV and the week 43 results are pending. An influenza A virus detected during week 40 was the first detection of influenza in Ireland this season and this isolate is currently undergoing subtyping and antigenic characterisation.

The NVRL also tested 28 respiratory non-sentinel specimens from hospitals, during week 43. Two specimens were positive for influenza A, nine were positive for RSV and 1 was positive for parainfluenza virus type-1. Both influenza A positive samples were from a single patient. No specimens were positive for influenza B or parainfluenza virus type-2 or -3.

**Table 1:** Sentinel GP influenza results by type, subtype and report week for the 2004/2005 influenza season

Week number	Total swabs	Positive swabs	Percentage positive	Influenza A (Unsubtyped)	Influenza B
40	2	1	50	1	0
41	7	0	0	0	0
42	5	0	0	0	0
43	5	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>

**Table 2:** Total number of sentinel and non-sentinel\* respiratory specimens and positive results by week for the 2004/2005 season

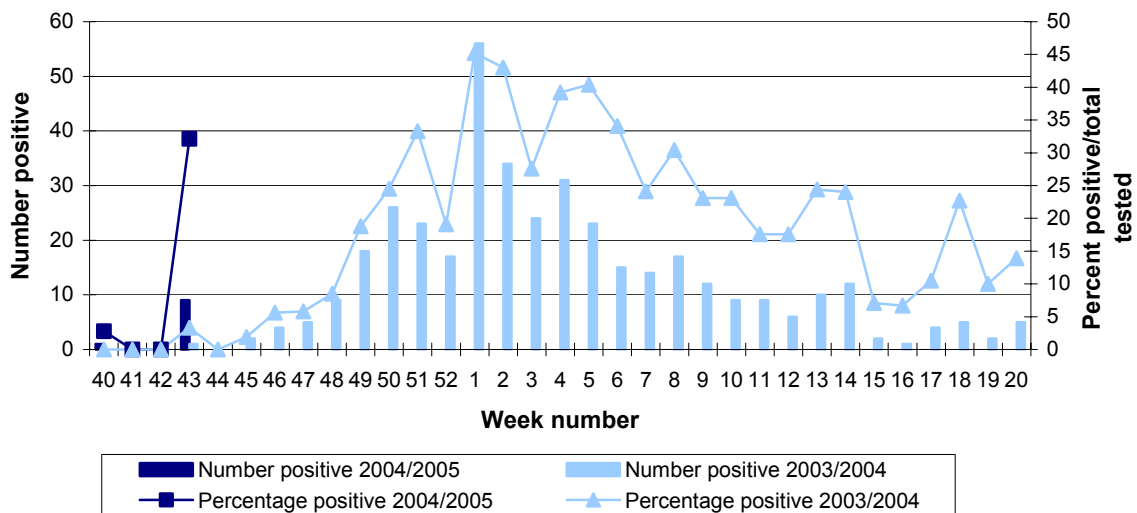
Week number	Total specimens	Influenza positive specimens	% Influenza positive	Influenza A (Unsubtyped)	Influenza B	RSV
40	38	1	2.6	1	0	1
41	21	0	0	0	0	0
42	32	0	0	0	0	0
43	33	2	6.1	2	0	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>

\* Please note that non-sentinel specimens include all specimens referred to the NVRL, these specimens are mainly from hospitals and some GPs and may include more than one specimen from each case.

**Table 3:** Total number of sentinel and non-sentinel\* influenza A and B positive specimens by health board for week 43 and the 2004/2005 season to date

	Week 43 2004			Season to date		
	Flu A	Flu B	Total	Flu A	Flu B	Total
ERHA	0	0	0	0	0	0
MHB	0	0	0	0	0	0
MWHB	0	0	0	1	0	1
NEHB	0	0	0	0	0	0
NWHB	0	0	0	0	0	0
SEHB	2	0	2	2	0	2
SHB	0	0	0	0	0	0
WHB	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>

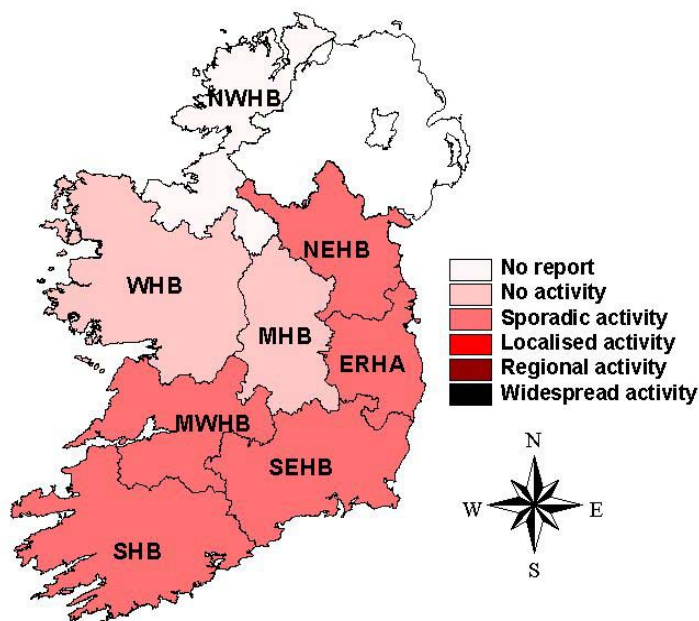
\* Please note that non-sentinel specimens include all specimens referred to the NVRL, these specimens are mainly from hospitals and some GPs and may include more than one specimen from each case.



**Figure 2.** Number and percentage of non-sentinel RSV positive specimens detected during the 2004/2005 and 2003/2004 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 42, five health boards reported sporadic activity, two reported no activity and one health board had received no reports.



**Figure 3:** Map of influenza activity by health board/authority during week 42 2004

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

The ILI rate decreased during week 43 in Northern Ireland and influenza activity remained at low levels. Returns were received from 19 out of 23 sentinel GP practices, giving a population coverage of 6.8%. Twenty-one cases of ILI were reported, corresponding to an ILI consultation rate of 18.2 per 100,000 population. There have been no reports of influenza virus detections in 2004/2005 to date.

<http://www.cdscni.org.uk/>

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

Clinical ILI activity remained low in the UK during week 43. The week 43 RCGP combined GP consultation rate for influenza and ILI was 10.3 per 100,000 population in England. This is similar to the week 42 rate. The ERNVL detected two influenza A (H3N2) viruses from hospital samples in week 41. One of these has since been strain typed as influenza A type/Wellington/1/2004 (H3N2). A decreased ILI rate of 7 per 100,000 population was reported by the Scottish sentinel GP scheme (17 per 100,000 in week 42). The rate for influenza consultations in Wales was 0.0 per 100,000 population. RSV was detected in non-sentinel specimens in England (20) and Wales (6) and in sentinel and non-sentinel specimens in Scotland (2) during week 43.

SCIEH

<http://www.show.scot.nhs.uk/scieh/infectious/respiratory/influenzasurveillance/influenzasurveillance.htm>

HPA: [http://www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics\\_az/influenza/flu.htm](http://www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/influenza/flu.htm)

### **Influenza activity in Europe**

During week 43, very low levels of influenza activity were seen throughout Europe. No sentinel isolates tested positive for influenza. RSV was detected in non-sentinel specimens in France (29) and the Netherlands (4). Three influenza viruses have been antigenically and/or genetically characterised in Europe since week 40 2004. Two were A/Wellington/1/2004 (H3N2)-like (from Norway and Sweden) and one was A/Fujian/411/2002 (H3N2)-like (from Germany). <http://www.eiss.org/>

### **Influenza activity in Canada**

During week 42 (week ending 16/10/2004), localised activity was reported in Alberta, with an outbreak in a long-term care facility. Elsewhere in Canada ILI rates were low. The sentinel GP network reported an ILI rate of 13 cases per 100,000 population. In week 42, there were eight influenza A and no influenza B detections. The influenza A/Fujian/411/02(H3N2)-like virus remains the predominant circulating strain.

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/fluwatch/index.html>

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

Low levels of influenza activity were seen in the US during week 41 (week ending 16/10/2004). WHO and NREVSS laboratories tested 652 specimens for influenza. Two were positive for influenza A (H3N2). One influenza virus, collected by U.S. laboratories since October 1<sup>st</sup>, has been characterised as influenza A/Fujian/411/02(H3N2)-like. <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/fluactivity.htm>

### **Influenza activity Worldwide**

During week 43, sporadic influenza activity was reported in Australia (3 A (not subtyped) and 3 B), China (9 A(H3), 2 A(not subtyped) and 6 B), Mexico (2 B) and the Ukraine (2 A(H3)). <http://rhone.b3e.jussieu.fr/flunet/www/>

Influenza activity in New Zealand continued to decrease in week 42 (week ending 15/10/2004), with sentinel GPs reporting an ILI consultation rate of 30.2 per 100,000 population. Influenza activity in New Zealand in 2004 peaked in week 38, with an ILI consultation rate of 127.5 per 100,000 population. The influenza A/Fujian/411/2002 (H3N2)-like virus remains the predominant circulating strain.  
[http://www.surv.esr.cri.nz/virology/influenza\\_weekly\\_update.php](http://www.surv.esr.cri.nz/virology/influenza_weekly_update.php)

## **Avian influenza**

### ***Thailand***

On October 25<sup>th</sup>, the Ministry of Public Health in Thailand confirmed an additional fatal case of human infection with H5N1 avian influenza. The patient was a 14-year-old girl from Sukhothai Province. She developed symptoms on the 8<sup>th</sup> October and died 11 days later. Chickens at her household died suddenly in late September. Since the beginning of 2004, Thailand has reported 17 laboratory confirmed cases of human infection with avian influenza A (H5N1). Twelve of these have been fatal. There is no evidence that efficient and sustained human-to-human transmission is currently occurring in Thailand.

### ***Viet Nam***

Since January 2004, Viet Nam has reported 27 laboratory confirmed cases of human infection with avian influenza A (H5N1). Twenty of these have been fatal. For further information on the avian influenza outbreaks please consult the following websites:

NDSC: <http://www.ndsc.ie/DiseaseTopicsA-Z/AvianInfluenza/>

WHO: [http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian\\_influenza/en/](http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/)

## **Northern Hemisphere influenza vaccine for the 2004/2005**

The WHO has published its recommendations on the composition of influenza vaccines for use in the 2004-2005 Northern Hemisphere influenza season.

- an A/New Caledonia/20/99(H1N1)-like virus
- an A/Fujian/411/2002(H3N2)-like virus<sup>a</sup>
- a B/Shanghai/361/2002-like virus<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> The currently used vaccine virus is A/Wyoming/3/2003. A /Kumamoto/102/2002 is also available as a vaccine virus.

<sup>b</sup> Candidate vaccine viruses include B/Shanghai/361/2002 and B/Jilin/20/2003, which is a B/Shanghai/361/2002-like virus.

<http://www.who.int/csr/disease/influenza/vaccinerecommendations1/en/>  
[www.emea.eu.int](http://www.emea.eu.int)

**Weekly influenza reports and further information on influenza are available on the NDSC website:**

<http://www.ndsc.ie/Publications/InfluenzaWeeklySurveillanceReport/>

<http://www.ndsc.ie/DiseaseTopicsA-Z/InfluenzaFlu/>