

Influenza Weekly Surveillance Report



A REPORT BY THE HEALTH PROTECTION SURVEILLANCE CENTRE IN COLLABORATION WITH THE IRISH COLLEGE OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS, THE NATIONAL VIRUS REFERENCE LABORATORY & THE DEPARTMENTS OF PUBLIC HEALTH.

Week 40 2005 (3rd to 9th Oct 2005)

Summary

Welcome to the first influenza surveillance report of the 2005/2006-influenza season. During week 40 2005, influenza activity was at low levels in Ireland, with five influenza-like illness (ILI) cases reported by sentinel GPs. No specimens tested by the NVRL were positive for influenza virus during week 40.

Background

This is the sixth season of influenza surveillance using computerised sentinel general practices in Ireland. The Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) is working in collaboration with the Irish College of General Practitioners (ICGP), the National Virus Reference Laboratory (NVRL) and the Departments of Public Health on this sentinel surveillance project. Thirty-eight sentinel general practices have been recruited to report on the number of patients with ILI on a weekly basis.

ILI is defined as the sudden onset of symptoms with a temperature of 38⁰C or more, with two or more of the following: headache, sore throat, dry cough and myalgia. Sentinel GPs send a combined nasal and throat swab, to the NVRL, on at least one patient per week where a clinical diagnosis of ILI is made during the influenza season. This report includes data on ILI cases reported by sentinel GPs, influenza test results from the NVRL, influenza notifications, registered deaths attributed to influenza, and regional influenza activity reported by the Departments of Public Health.

Results

Clinical Data

Five ILI cases were reported from sentinel GPs during week 40 2005, corresponding to an ILI consultation rate of 6.1 per 100,000 population (figure 1).

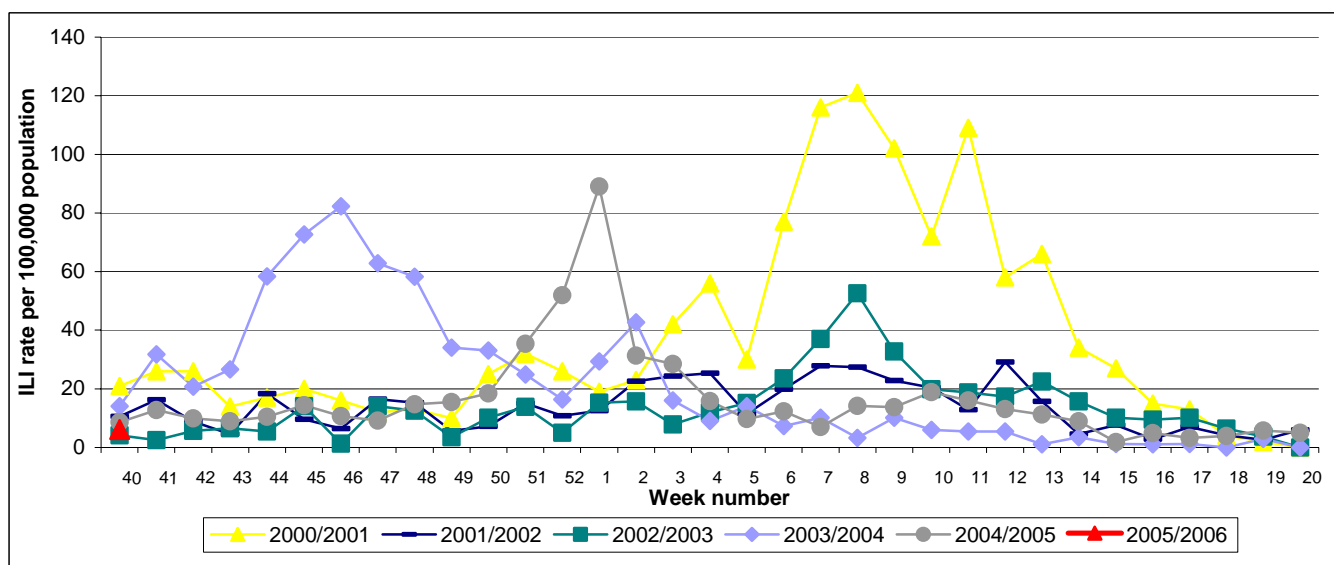


Figure 1: GP consultation rate for ILI per 100,000 population by week, during the 2000/2001, 2001/2002, 2002/2003, 2003/2004, 2004/2005 & 2005/2006 influenza seasons.

Results (continued)

All five ILI cases were aged between 15-64 years. Twenty-six of the 38 (68.4%) sentinel general practices reported during week 40 2005, with four reporting ILI.

Virological Data from the National Virus Reference Laboratory (NVRL)

The NVRL tested four specimens taken by sentinel GPs during week 40 2005, all four specimens were negative for influenza virus. The NVRL also tested 31 non-sentinel specimens, taken during week 40 2005, mainly from hospitalised paediatric cases. One non-sentinel specimen was positive for respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and one was positive for Adenovirus and none were positive for influenza virus. Figure 2 compares the ILI consultation rates by season and the number of positive influenza specimens tested by the NVRL.

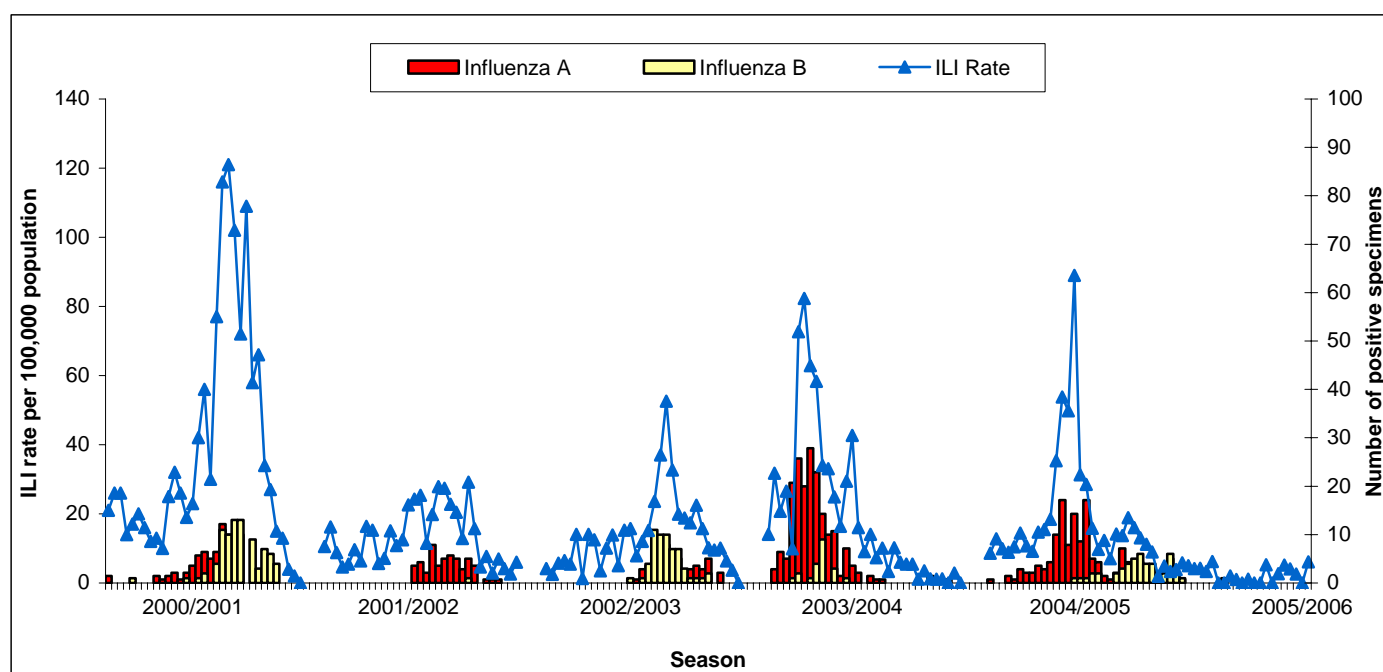


Figure 2: ILI rate per 100,000 population and the number of positive influenza specimens detected by the NVRL during the 2000/2001, 2001/2002, 2002/2003, 2003/2004 & 2004/2005 seasons, summer 2005 and the 2005/2006 season.

Weekly Influenza Notifications

One influenza B case was notified to HPSC during week 40 2005, however this was a late notification from April 2005. Influenza cases notified to HPSC during the summer of 2005 and during the 2005/2006 influenza season are shown in figure 3, and compared to ILI consultation rates.

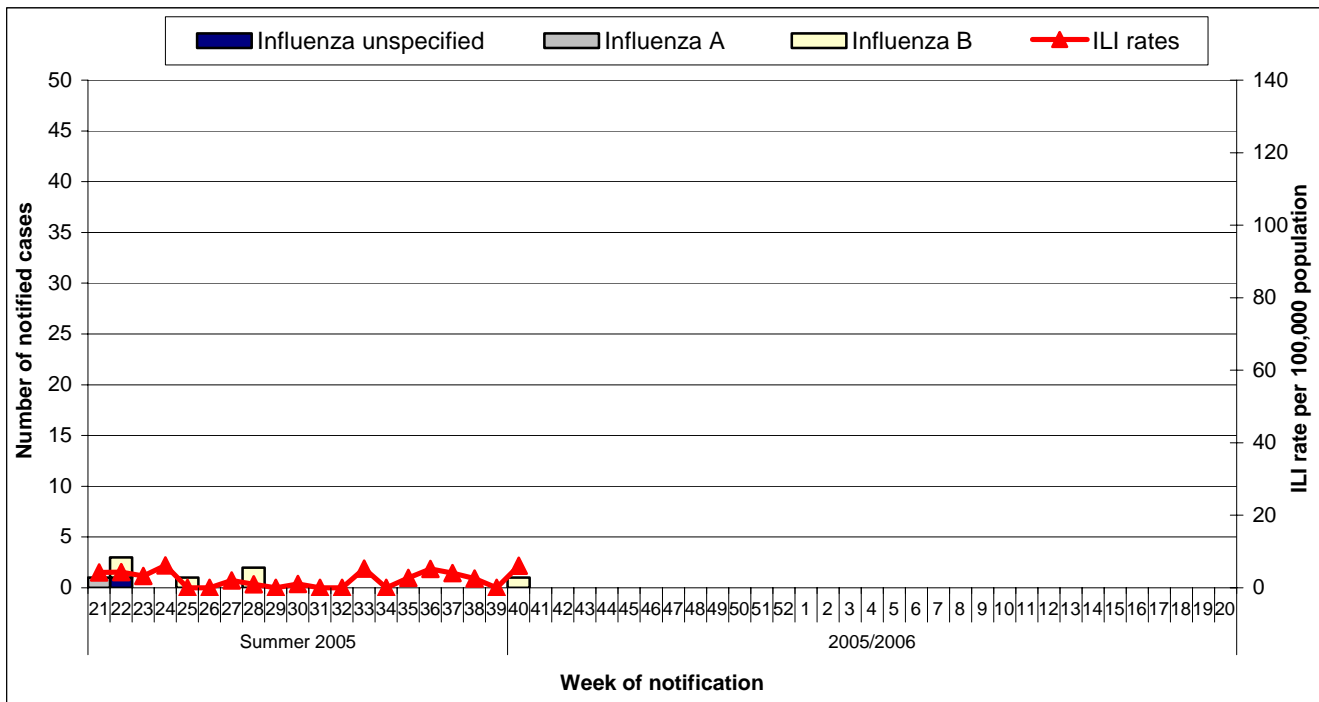


Figure 3: Number of notifications* of influenza (possible & confirmed) by type and by week of notification compared to sentinel GP ILI consultation rates per 100,000 population during the summer of 2005 and the 2005/2006 influenza season.
 *Notification data are provisional and were extracted from [CIDR](#) on the 12/10/2005 at 17.31.

Mortality Data

No deaths registered during week 40 2005 were attributed to influenza.

Outbreak Reports

No influenza/ILI outbreaks were reported to HPSC during week 40 2005 or during the summer of 2005.

Regional Influenza Activity by HSE-Health Area

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 influenza cases and influenza/ILI outbreaks. Each Department of Public Health has established one sentinel hospital in each HSE-Health Area, to report total hospital admissions, accident and emergency admissions and respiratory admissions data on a weekly basis. Sentinel primary and secondary schools were also established in each HSE-Health Area in close proximity to the sentinel GPs, reporting absenteeism data on a weekly basis. Reporting of influenza activity by HSE-Health Area will begin next week.

Influenza Activity in Northern Ireland

Thirty ILI cases were reported from sentinel GPs in Northern Ireland during week 40 2005, corresponding to a rate of 21.3 per 100,000 population. There were no laboratory detections of influenza for week 40 2005.

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

Influenza Activity in England, Scotland & Wales

Clinical indications of influenza activity are increasing slowly in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales but remain below clinical baseline thresholds. In England, GP consultations for ILI are highest in children aged 0-4 years. Detections of influenza A and B from NHS and HPA laboratories are also at low levels, as expected for this time of year. http://www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/influenza/flureports0506.htm

Influenza Activity in Europe

The European Influenza Surveillance Scheme will produce their first report of the 2005/2006 season on the 21st October 2005. <http://www.eiss.org/index.cgi>

Influenza Activity in Canada

During week 39 2005, localised influenza activity was reported in Saskatchewan, and sporadic activity was reported in British Columbia, while the rest of Canada reported no influenza activity. During week 39 2005, the Public Health Agency of Canada received 718 reports of laboratory tests for influenza, with no positive detections of influenza. <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/fluwatch/index.html>

Influenza Activity in the United States

The first report of the 2005/2006 influenza season will be published on the 14th of October 2005.
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>

Influenza Activity Worldwide

During week 39 2005, Australia (1 AH1 & 3 A untyped), Brazil, China (5 AH1, 2 AH3, 3 A untyped, & 8B), Madagascar, Mexico (3A untyped) and New Zealand (2 AH1, 2 AH3 & 2 B) all reported sporadic influenza activity. <http://gamapserver.who.int/GlobalAtlas/home.asp>

Avian Influenza

As of the 10th of October 2005, 117 confirmed human cases and 60 deaths of avian influenza A (H5N1) cases have been reported to the WHO from Indonesian, Vietnam, Thailand and Cambodia.

Further information on avian influenza is available on the following websites:

WHO http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/

HPSC <http://www.hpsc.ie/A-Z/Respiratory/AvianInfluenza/>

ECDC <http://www.ecdc.eu.int/>

Further information on influenza can be found on the [HPSC website](#)

Acknowledgements

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This report was produced by Dr Lisa Domegan & Dr Joan O'Donnell, HPSC