

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 2006 (2nd to 8th October 2006)

Summary

Welcome to the first influenza surveillance report of the 2006/2007-influenza season. During week 40 2006, influenza activity was at low levels in Ireland, with four 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 seventh 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. Forty-seven 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 38°C 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

Four ILI cases were reported from sentinel GPs during week 40 2006, corresponding to an ILI consultation rate of 2.8 per 100,000 population (figure 1).

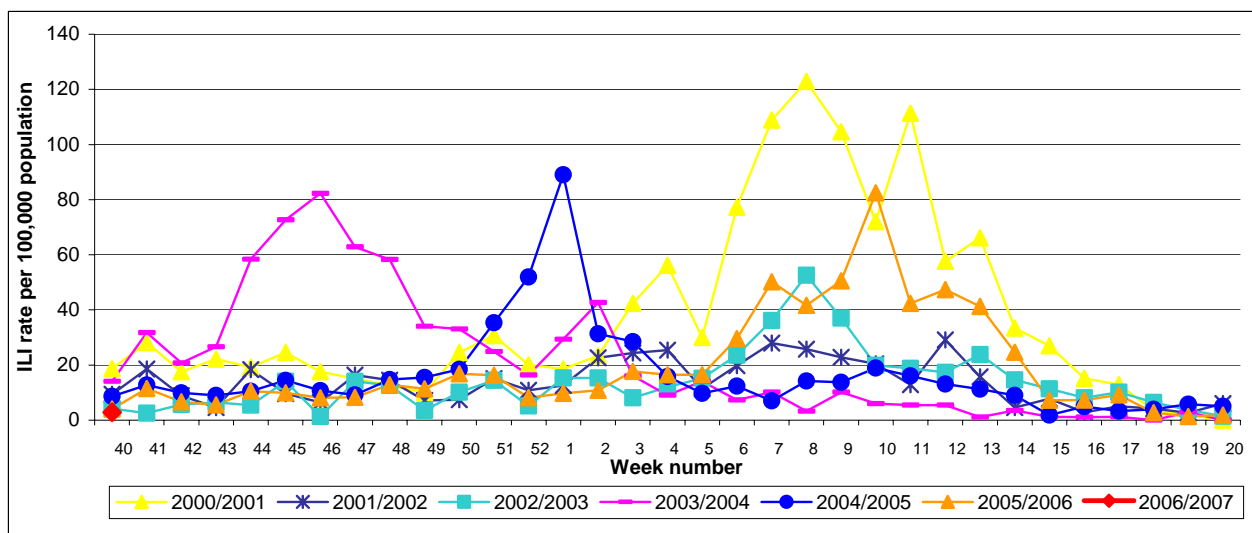


Figure 1: GP consultation rate for ILI per 100,000 population by week, during the 2000/2001, 2001/2002, 2002/2003, 2003/2004, 2004/2005, 2005/2006 & 2006/2007 influenza seasons.

Results (continued)

One ILI case was aged between 0-4 years (9.9 per 100,000 population), one ILI case was aged between 5-14 years, (5.0 per 100,000 population), two ILI cases were aged between 15-64 years (2.1 per 100,000 population) and no ILI cases were reported in those aged 65 or older. Thirty-nine of the 47 (83%) sentinel general practices reported during week 40 2006, with three reporting ILI.

Virological Data from the National Virus Reference Laboratory (NVRL)

The NVRL tested five specimens taken by sentinel GPs during week 40 2006, all five specimens were negative for influenza virus. The NVRL also tested 37 non-sentinel specimens taken during week 40 2006, mainly from hospitalised paediatric cases. Two non-sentinel specimens were positive for respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and two non-sentinel specimens were positive for Parainfluenza virus 3 and none were positive for influenza virus (table 1). Figure 2 compares the ILI consultation rates by season and the number of positive influenza specimens tested by the NVRL.

Table 1: Number of sentinel and non-sentinel* respiratory specimens and positive results for week 40 2006

Week Number	Specimen Type	Total Specimens	No. Influenza Positive	% Influenza Positive	Influenza A	Influenza B	RSV
40 2006	Sentinel	5	0	0.0	0	0	NA
	Non-Sentinel	37	0	0.0	0	0	2
	Total	42	0	0.0	0	0	2

*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.

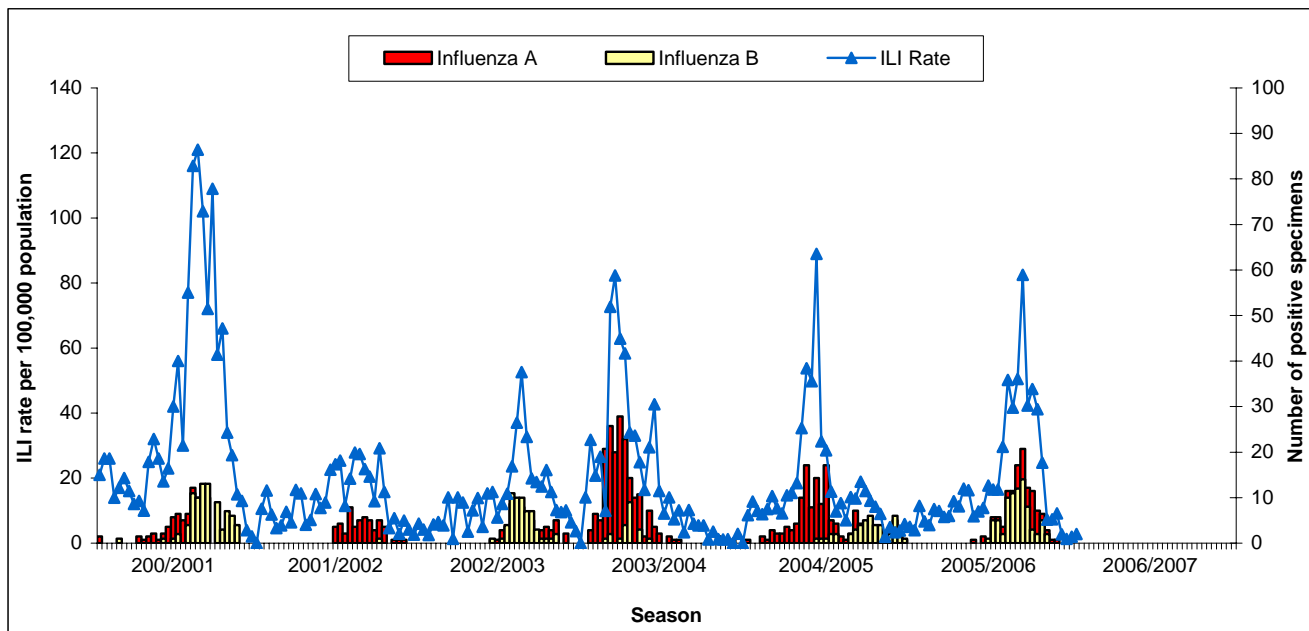


Figure 2: ILI rate per 100,000 population and the number of positive influenza specimens detected by the NVRL during the 2000/2001, 2001/2002, 2002/2003, 2003/2004, 2004/2005, summer 2005, 2005/2006, summer 2006 & 2006/2007 seasons.

Weekly Influenza Notifications

No influenza cases were notified to HPSC during week 40 2006. Influenza cases notified to HPSC during the summer of 2006 and during the 2006/2007 influenza season are shown in figure 3, and compared to ILI consultation rates.

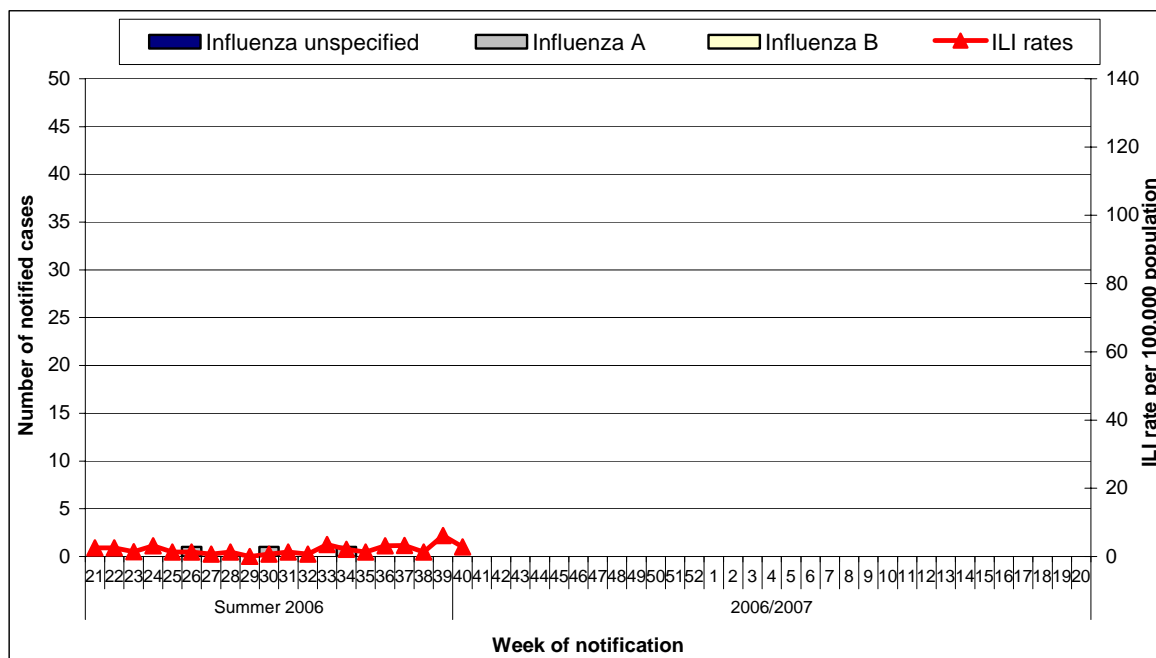


Figure 3: Number of notifications* of influenza (possible & confirmed) by type and by week of notification compared to sentinel GP ILI consultation rates per 100,000 population during the summer of 2006 and the 2006/2007 influenza season.

*Notification data are provisional and were extracted from [CIDR](#) on the 11/10/2006 at 10.06

Mortality Data

No deaths registered during week 40 2006 were attributed to influenza.

Outbreak Reports

No influenza/ILI outbreaks were reported to HPSC during week 40 2006 or during the summer of 2006.

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-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-Area in close proximity to the sentinel GPs, reporting absenteeism data on a weekly basis. Reporting of influenza activity by HSE-Areas will begin next week.

Influenza Activity in Northern Ireland

Thirty-two ILI cases were reported from sentinel GPs in Northern Ireland during week 40 2006, corresponding to a rate of 33.8 per 100,000 population, an increase from the week 39 rate of 10.2 per 100,000 population. There were no laboratory detections of influenza for week 40 2006. <http://www.cdscni.org.uk>

Influenza Activity in England, Scotland & Wales

Influenza activity remains low across Britain. Clinical indicators of influenza activity have remained stable in England, Scotland and Wales. 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%5Faz/influenza/seasonal/activity0607/flureport.htm>

Influenza Activity in Europe

The European Influenza Surveillance Scheme will produce their first report of the 2006/2007 season on the 20th October 2006. <http://www.eiss.org/index.cgi>

Influenza Activity in Canada

During weeks 37 and 38 2006, sporadic activity was reported in British Columbia and Alberta, while the rest of Canada reported no activity. From weeks 37 to 38 2006, 5 (0.3%) of the 1,793 specimens tested for influenza virus were positive for influenza A, with no influenza B detected. The ILI consultation rates remained low: 9 per 1,000 patient visits in week 37 and 7 per 1,000 patient visits in week 38. One school outbreak was reported in British Columbia during week 37. <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/fluwatch/index.html>

Influenza Activity in the United States

The first report of the 2006/2007 influenza season will be published on the 13th of October 2006. <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>

Influenza Activity Worldwide

During week 39 2006 the following influenza isolates were reported, Argentina 17 (6 A untyped and 11 B), Australia 4 B, Chile 16 (2 AH1 and 14 A untyped), China 41 (16 AH1, 19 AH3, 5 A untyped, & 1 B), Madagascar 6 AH3 and New Zealand 2 AH3. <http://gamapserver.who.int/GlobalAtlas/home.asp>

Avian Influenza

As of the 11th of October 2006, 253 confirmed human cases and 148 deaths of avian influenza A (H5N1) cases have been reported to the WHO from Azerbaijan, Cambodia, China, Djibouti, Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, Thailand, Turkey and Vietnam.

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

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

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

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

Northern Hemisphere Influenza Vaccine for the 2006/2007 Season

The members of the WHO Collaborating Centres on Influenza recommended that influenza vaccines for the 2006/2007 influenza season in the Northern Hemisphere contain the following strains:

- an A/New Caledonia/20/99(H1N1)-like virus;
- an A/Wisconsin/67/2005 (H3N2)-like virus^a;
- a B/Malaysia/2506/2004-like virus^b

Candidate vaccine viruses include:

^aA/Wisconsin/67/2005 (H3N2) and A/Hiroshima/52/2005

^bB/Malaysia/2506/2004 virus and B/Ohio/1/2005

<http://www.who.int/csr/disease/influenza/recommendations2007north/en/index.html>

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

Acknowledgements

HPSC, ICGP and NVRL wish to thank the sentinel GPs who have participated in the GP sentinel surveillance system and who have contributed towards this report

This report was produced by Sarah Jackson & Dr Joan O'Donnell, HPSC