

Influenza Surveillance in Ireland – Weekly Report

Influenza Week 6 2020 (3rd February – 9th February 2020)



Summary

- **Influenza activity peaked in late December 2019 and has decreased significantly since. However, activity still remained above baseline levels in Ireland during week 6 2020 (week ending 9th February 2020). Overall, influenza A(H3N2) has been the dominant circulating virus this season. Increases in influenza B activity have been observed in recent weeks. Confirmed influenza hospitalisations are now at low levels. As influenza activity is still above baseline levels, it is recommended that antivirals be considered for the treatment and prophylaxis of influenza in at-risk groups.**
- **Influenza-like illness (ILI):** The sentinel GP influenza-like illness (ILI) consultation rate was 20.5 per 100,000 population in week 6 2020. This was a decrease compared to the updated rate of 23.8 per 100,000 population reported during week 5 2020.
 - ILI rate remain above the baseline Irish ILI threshold in week 6 (18/100,000 population).
 - ILI age specific rates increased in the 5-14 years age group and decreased in all other age groups during week 6.
- **GP Out of Hours:** The proportion of influenza-related calls to GP Out-of-Hours services was 2% during week 6 2020 and remains at low levels.
- **National Virus Reference Laboratory (NVRL):**
 - Influenza detections decreased in week 6 with 48 (10%) influenza positive specimens reported by the NVRL. This compares to an updated figure of 79 (16%) detections during week 5 2020.
 - Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) positivity decreased in week 6 2020. RSV activity peaked in late December 2019, and is at low levels nationally.
 - Parainfluenza virus, adenovirus and human metapneumovirus (hMPV), coronavirus and picornavirus (which includes both rhinovirus and enterovirus) continue to be detected.
- **Hospitalisations:** During week 6 2020, 79 confirmed influenza hospitalised cases were notified to HPSC. For the 2019/2020 season to date, 3,323 confirmed influenza hospitalised cases have been notified to HPSC.
- **Critical care admissions:** Two confirmed influenza cases were admitted to critical care units and reported to HPSC during week 6 2020. During the 2019/2020 season to date, 123 confirmed influenza cases have been reported as admitted to ICU.
- **Mortality:** Three influenza-associated deaths were reported during week 6 2020. During the 2019/2020 season to date, 85 influenza-associated deaths have been reported to HPSC. Excess all-cause mortality was reported in Ireland, in adults aged 65 years and older, from week 51 2019 to week 2 2020.
- **Outbreaks:** During week 6 2020, three influenza outbreaks were reported to HPSC.
- **International:** In the temperate zone of the northern hemisphere, respiratory illness indicators and influenza activity remained elevated overall. In Europe, influenza activity continued to increase across the region but appeared to decrease in some countries of Northern Europe. Worldwide, seasonal influenza A viruses accounted for the majority of detections.

1. GP sentinel surveillance system - Clinical Data

- During week 6 2020, 52 influenza-like illness (ILI) cases were reported by sentinel GPs, this corresponds to an ILI consultation rate of 20.5 per 100,000 population and is a decrease compared to the updated rate of 23.8 per 100,000 population reported during week 5 2020.
- The ILI rate for week 6 2020 is above the baseline threshold (18.1/100,000 population) but below the medium intensity Irish ILI threshold (57.5/100,000 population) (figures 1 & 2).
- Of the 60 sentinel GP practices, 52 (87%) reported data in week 6.
- ILI age specific rates increased in the 5-14 years age group and decreased in all other age groups (figure 3).
- HPSC in consultation with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) has revised the Irish baseline ILI threshold for the 2019/2020 influenza season to 18.1 per 100,000 population; this threshold indicates the likelihood that influenza is circulating in the community. The Moving Epidemic Method (MEM) has been adopted by ECDC to calculate thresholds for GP ILI consultations in a standardised approach across Europe.*
- The baseline ILI threshold (18.1/100,000 population), medium (57.5/100,000 population) and high (86.5/100,000 population) intensity ILI thresholds are shown in figure 1.

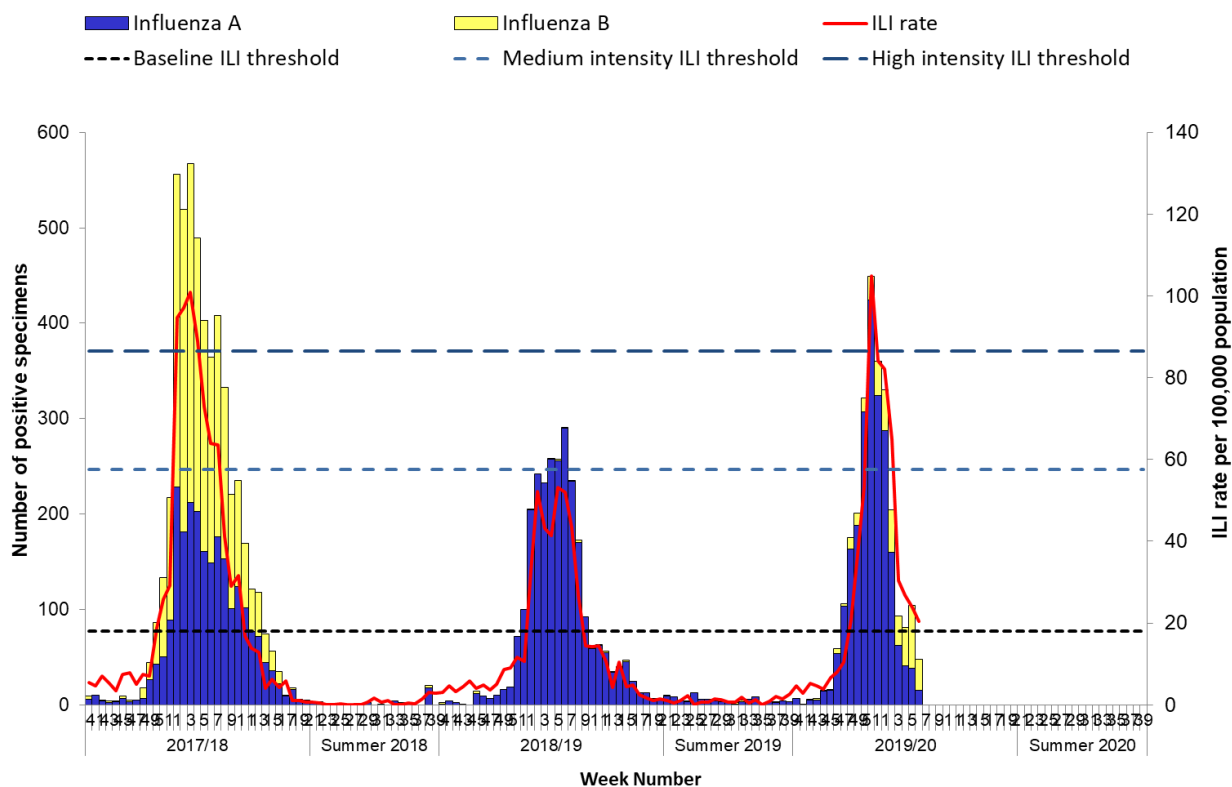


Figure 1: ILI sentinel GP consultation rates per 100,000 population, baseline ILI threshold, medium and high intensity ILI thresholds* and number of positive influenza A and B specimens tested by the NVRL, by influenza week and season. Source: ICGP and NVRL

* For further information on the Moving Epidemic Method (MEM) to calculate ILI thresholds:
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22897919>

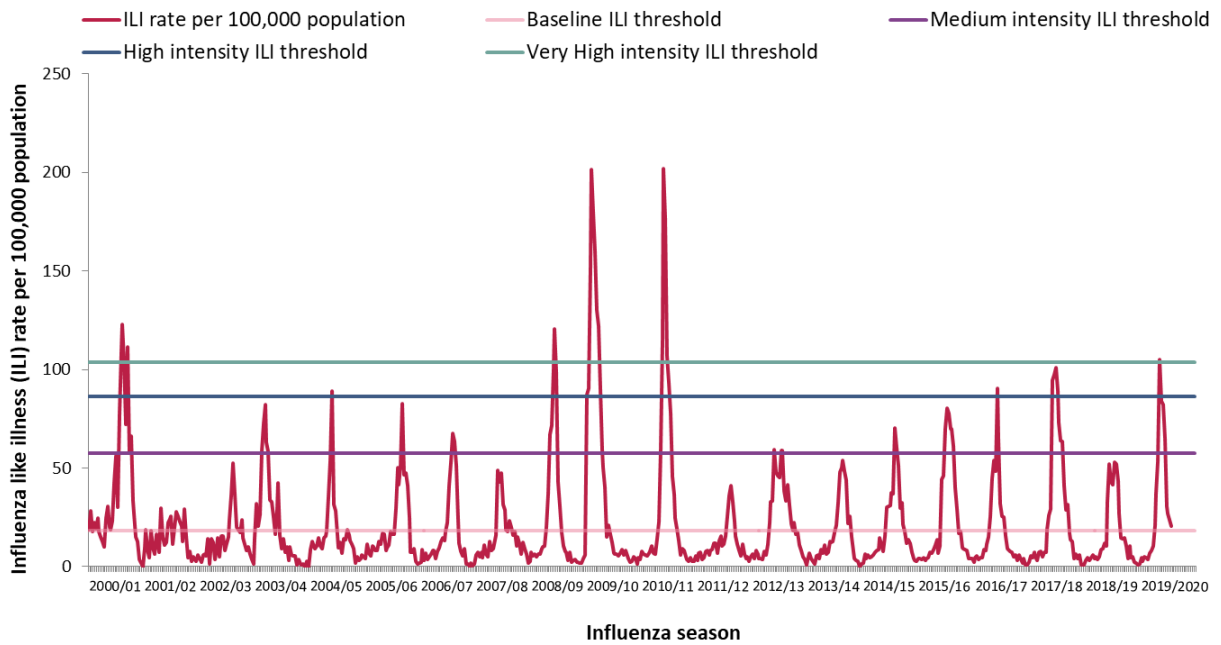


Figure 2: Sentinel GP ILI consultation rate per 100,000 population by week and influenza season (excluding summer periods). *Source: ICGP.*

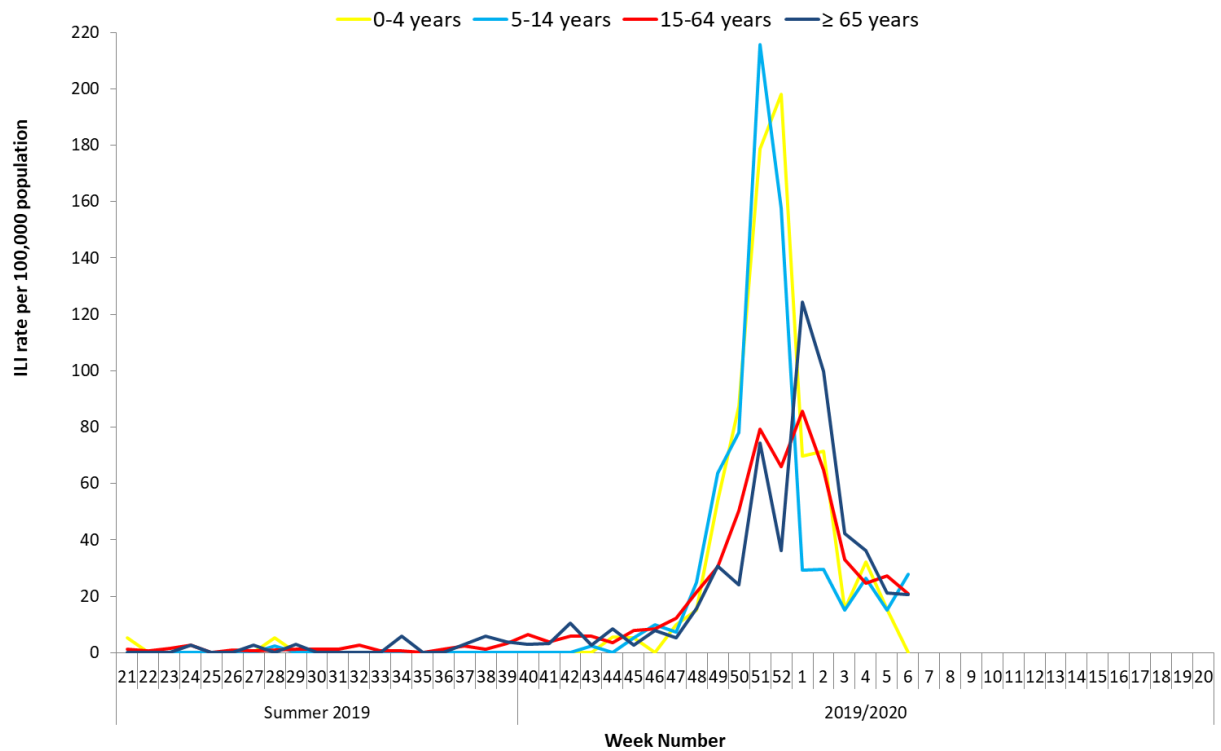


Figure 3: Age specific sentinel GP ILI consultation rate per 100,000 population by week during the summer of 2019 and the 2019/2020 influenza season to date. *Source: ICGP.*

2. Influenza and Other Respiratory Virus Detections - NVRL

The data reported in this section for the 2019/2020 influenza season refer to sentinel specimens routinely tested for influenza and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and non-sentinel respiratory specimens routinely tested for influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), adenovirus, parainfluenza viruses types 1, 2, 3 & 4 (PIV-1, -2, -3 & -4) and human metapneumovirus (hMPV) by the National Virus Reference Laboratory (NVRL) (figures 4, 5 & 6 and tables 1, 2 & 3). As there are no historic data on picornaviruses or coronaviruses for seasonal comparisons, data on these viruses are not included in this report.

- During week 6 2020, influenza detections decreased with 48 (10%) influenza positive specimens reported by the NVRL. This compares to an updated figure of 79 (16%) detections during week 5 2020.
- During week 6, 41 confirmed influenza positive specimens were reported from non-sentinel sources; 11 were influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, two were influenza A(not subtyped) and 28 were influenza B.
- During week 6, seven confirmed influenza positive specimens were reported from the sentinel GP network; two were influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 and five were influenza B (Victoria lineage).
- Data from the NVRL for week 6 2020 and the 2019/2020 season to date are detailed in tables 1, 2 and 3.
- Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) positivity decreased in week 6 2020 (figure 6). RSV activity is at low levels nationally.
- Sporadic detections of parainfluenza virus, adenovirus and human metapneumovirus (hMPV) have been reported to date this season (table 3).
- Influenza A(H3) has been the dominant circulating virus this season overall, with lower numbers of A(H1N1)pdm09 and influenza B also being reported (figures 4 & 5). Increases in influenza B activity have been observed in recent weeks.
- Coinfections of all seasonal respiratory viruses were reported during week 6 2020.
- Human metapneumovirus, adenovirus, parainfluenza virus (table 3) and picornavirus (which includes both rhinovirus and enterovirus) continue to be detected.
- The overall proportion of non-sentinel specimens positive for respiratory viruses was 24% during week 6 2020.

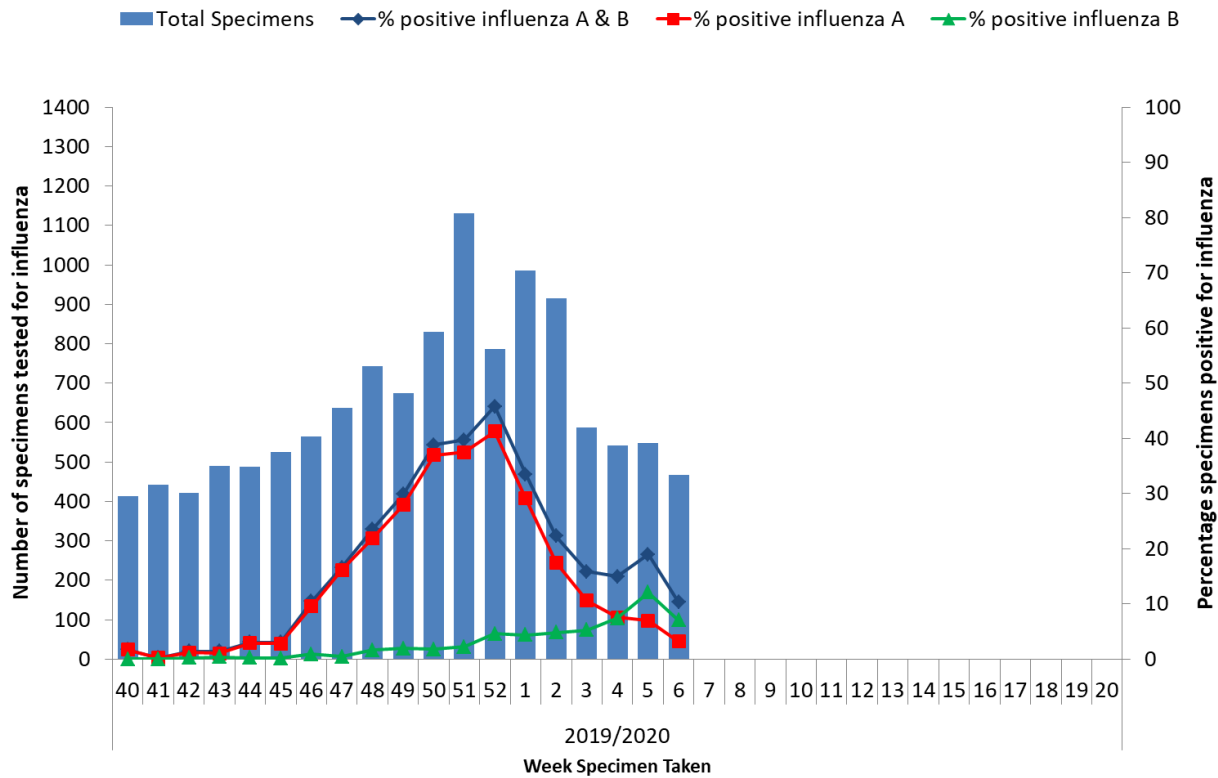


Figure 4: Number of specimens (from sentinel and non-sentinel sources combined) tested by the NVRL for influenza and percentage influenza positive by week for the 2019/2020 influenza season. Source: NVRL.

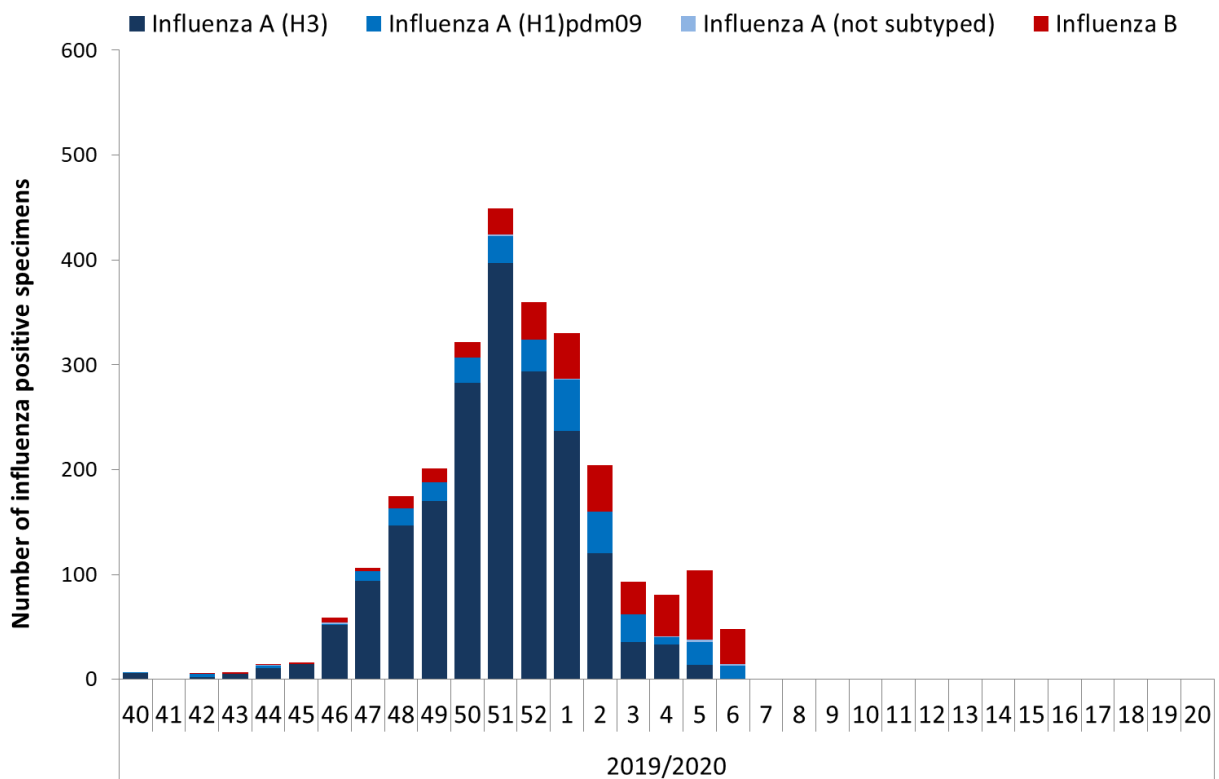


Figure 5: Number of positive influenza specimens (from sentinel and non-sentinel sources combined) by influenza type/subtype tested by the NVRL, by week for the 2019/2020 influenza season. Source: NVRL.

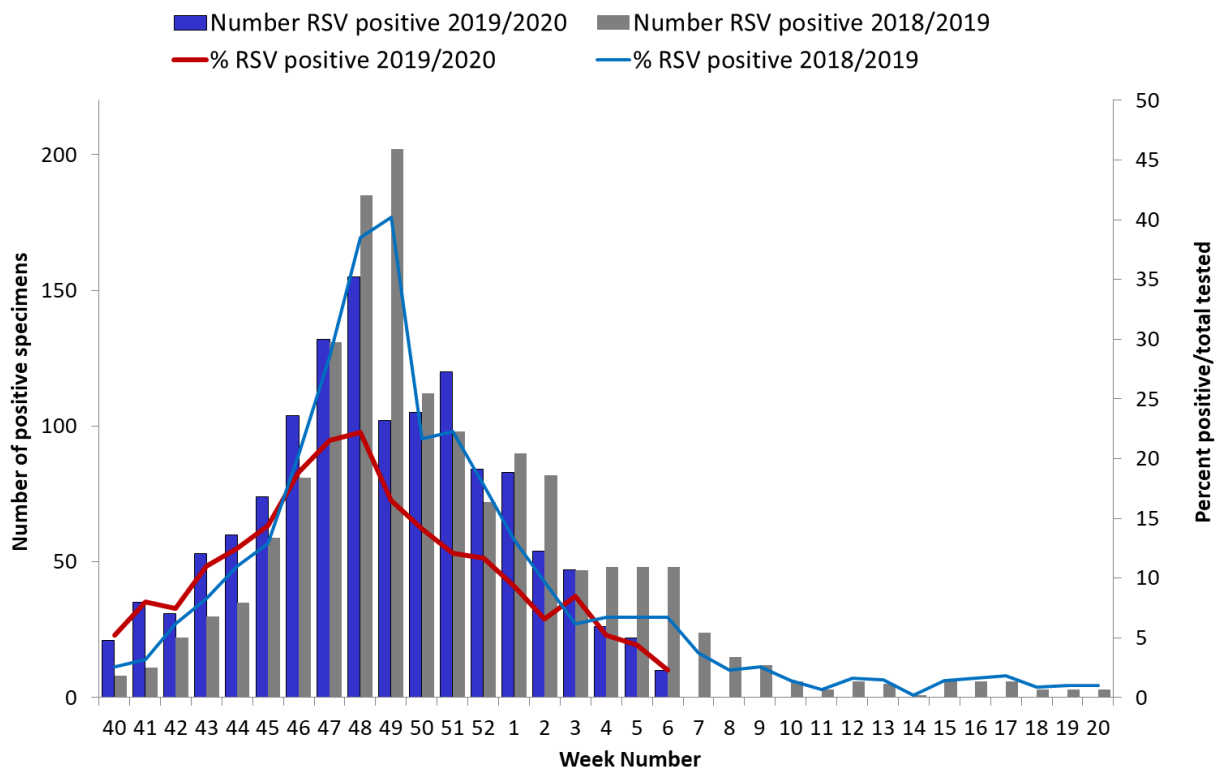


Figure 6: Number and percentage of non-sentinel RSV positive specimens detected by the NVRL during the 2019/2020 season, compared to the 2018/2019 season. *Source: NVRL.*

Genetic Characterisation of Influenza Viruses– Early season 2019/20

A selection of influenza positive specimens between week 40 and week 47, 2019 (n=43) was chosen for further molecular characterisation. The full hemagglutinin genes of circulating influenza viruses were sequenced from original clinical specimens. Sequences were compared to a bank of reference sequences recommended in the ECDC/TESSY Technical Note: Influenza virus characterisation guidelines for the northern hemisphere influenza season 2019-2020.

Influenza A(H1) pdm 09 (5)

Of the 5 Influenza (H1) pdm09 viruses characterised, 4 (80%) fell within A(H1)pdm 09 6B.1A5A group represented by A/Norway/3433/2018. This virus is the predominant A(H1)pdm09 group reported in Europe at the moment. One of the five viruses fell within the A(H1)pdm09 6B.1A5B group represented by A/Switzerland/3330/2018. The current Northern Hemisphere A(H1)pdm09 vaccine component is clade 6B.1A1, represented by A/Brisbane/02/2018 (H1N1)pdm-09 virus. However, it is anticipated that the vaccine virus will be effective based upon haemagglutination inhibition assays conducted with post-infection ferret antisera raised against the vaccine virus.

Influenza A(H3N2) (33)

Of the 33 Influenza (H3) viruses characterised, 25 (76%) fell within the current Northern Hemisphere H3 vaccine component clade 3C.3a1, represented by A/Kansas/14/2017. However, 8 subclade 3C.2a1b were also detected. Five (62.5%) were classified as 3C.2a1 + T131K mutation, represented by A/South Australia/34/2009 and this virus is the predominant 3C.2a1b virus reported in Europe at the moment. In addition, 3 viruses were classified as subclade 3c.2a1b + T135K mutation. Two viruses were further characterised based upon the presence of additional mutations into the 3C.2A1B + T135K-A cluster represented by A/La Rioja/ 2202/2018 and one virus from the recently emerged 3c.2a1b + T135K –B cluster characterised by A/Hong Kong/2675/2019.

Influenza B (5)

Five influenza B viruses were characterised. All five were Influenza B Victoria lineage 1A with the triple amino acid deletion (Δ 162-164 B subgroup) represented by B/Washington/02/2019. This is the predominant influenza B reported in Europe and is not included in the current Northern Hemisphere vaccine. The World Health Organization, in the “Recommended composition of influenza virus vaccine for use in the 2019-2020 northern hemisphere season” stated that post vaccination sera collected from humans vaccinated with the current vaccine component B/Colorado/06/2017 like-virus (B/Victoria/2/87 lineage) (clade 1A_Δ2) reacted similarly with representative B/Victoria lineage virus with three, two or no amino acid deletions.

Table 1: Number of sentinel* and non-sentinel[†] respiratory specimens tested by the NVRL and positive influenza results, for week 6 2020. Source: NVRL

| Week | Specimen type | Total tested | Number influenza positive | % Influenza positive | Influenza A | | | | Influenza B | | | |
|-----------|---------------|--------------|---------------------------|----------------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| | | | | | A (H1)pdm09 | A (H3) | A (not subtyped) | Total influenza A | B (unspecified) | B Victoria lineage | B Yamagata lineage | Total influenza B |
| 6 2020 | Sentinel | 29 | 7 | 24.1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| | Non-sentinel | 438 | 41 | 9.4 | 11 | 0 | 2 | 13 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 28 |
| | Total | 467 | 48 | 10.3 | 13 | 0 | 2 | 15 | 28 | 5 | 0 | 33 |
| 2019/2020 | Sentinel | 837 | 436 | 52.1 | 46 | 303 | 1 | 350 | 0 | 84 | 2 | 86 |
| | Non-sentinel | 11356 | 2148 | 18.9 | 241 | 1614 | 8 | 1863 | 285 | 0 | 0 | 285 |
| | Total | 12193 | 2584 | 21.2 | 287 | 1917 | 9 | 2213 | 285 | 84 | 2 | 371 |

Table 2: Number of sentinel* and non-sentinel respiratory specimens tested by the NVRL and positive RSV results, for week 6 2020. Source: NVRL

| Week | Specimen type | Total tested | Number RSV positive | % RSV positive | RSV A | RSV B | RSV (unspecified) |
|-----------|---------------|--------------|---------------------|----------------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| 6 2020 | Sentinel | 29 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Non-sentinel | 438 | 10 | 2.3 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| | Total | 467 | 10 | 2.1 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| 2019/2020 | Sentinel | 837 | 34 | 4.1 | 31 | 3 | 0 |
| | Non-sentinel | 11356 | 1318 | 11.6 | 0 | 0 | 1318 |
| | Total | 12193 | 1352 | 11.1 | 31 | 3 | 1318 |

Table 3: Number of non-sentinel specimens tested by the NVRL for other respiratory viruses and positive results, for week 6 2020. Source: NVRL

| Week | Specimen type | Total tested | Adenovirus | % Adenovirus | PIV-1 | % PIV-1 | PIV-2 | % PIV-2 | PIV-3 | % PIV-3 | PIV-4 | % PIV-4 | hMPV | % hMPV |
|-----------|---------------|--------------|------------|--------------|-------|---------|-------|---------|-------|---------|-------|---------|------|--------|
| 6 2020 | Non-sentinel | 438 | 15 | 3.4 | 1 | 0.2 | 3 | 0.7 | 2 | 0.5 | 2 | 0.5 | 31 | 7.1 |
| 2019/2020 | Non-sentinel | 11356 | 221 | 1.9 | 218 | 1.9 | 121 | 1.1 | 27 | 0.2 | 30 | 0.3 | 533 | 4.7 |

*Sentinel specimens are only tested for influenza and RSV

[†] Please note that non-sentinel specimens relate to specimens referred to the NVRL (other than sentinel specimens) and may include more than one specimen from each case.

3. Regional Influenza Activity by HSE-Area

Influenza activity is based on sentinel GP ILI consultation rates, laboratory data and outbreaks.

The geographical spread of influenza/ILI during week 6 2020 is shown in figure 7. During week 6, regional influenza activity was reported in HSE-E and -MW, localised activity was reported in HSE-M,-SE, -S, and -W, and sporadic activity was reported in HSE-NE and -NW.

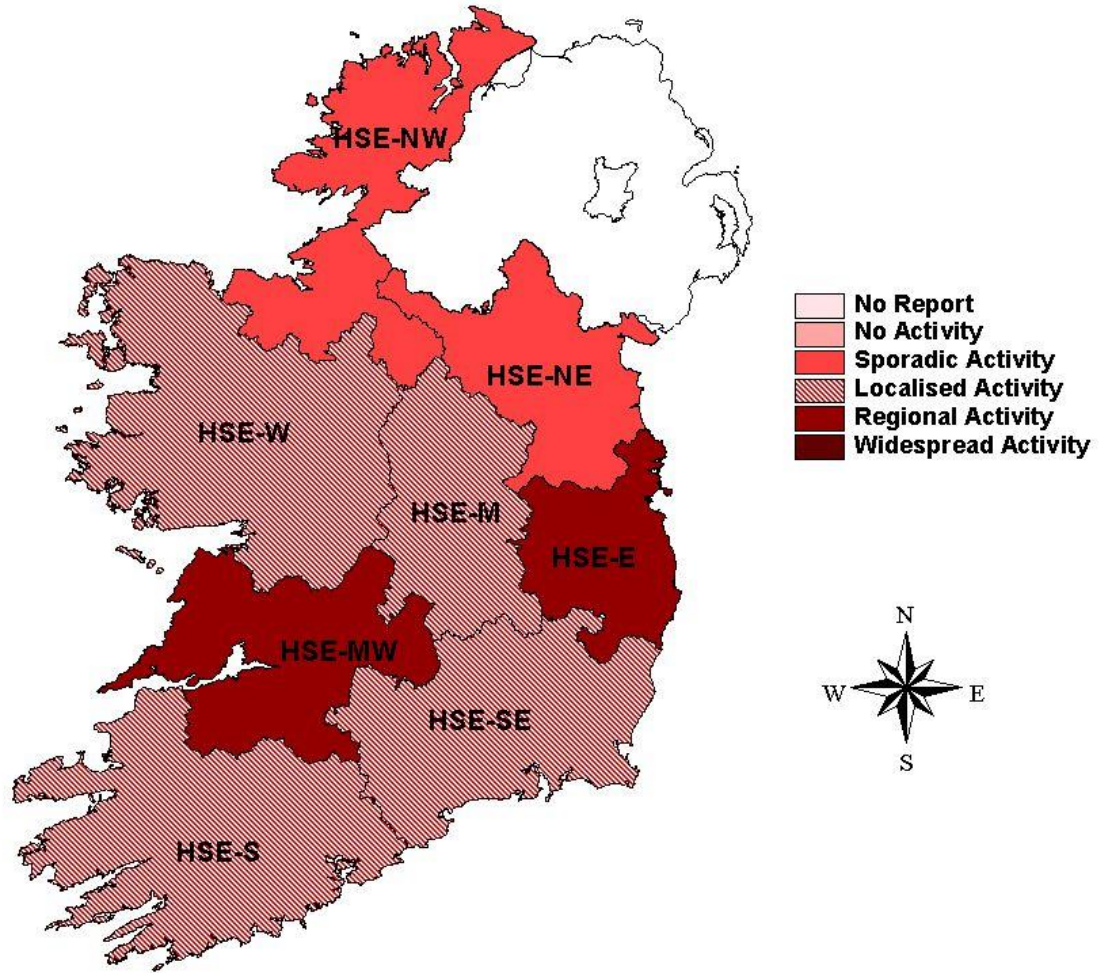


Figure 7: Map of provisional influenza activity by HSE-Area during influenza week 6 2020

Sentinel hospitals

The Departments of Public Health have established at least one sentinel hospital in each HSE-Area, to report data on total, emergency and respiratory admissions on a weekly basis.

Respiratory admissions reported from a network of sentinel hospitals were at medium levels, at 308 admissions during week 6 2020 (figure 8). This was a decrease compared to the 320 respiratory admissions reported during week 5 2020. Six of the eight hospitals reported data for week 6 2020.

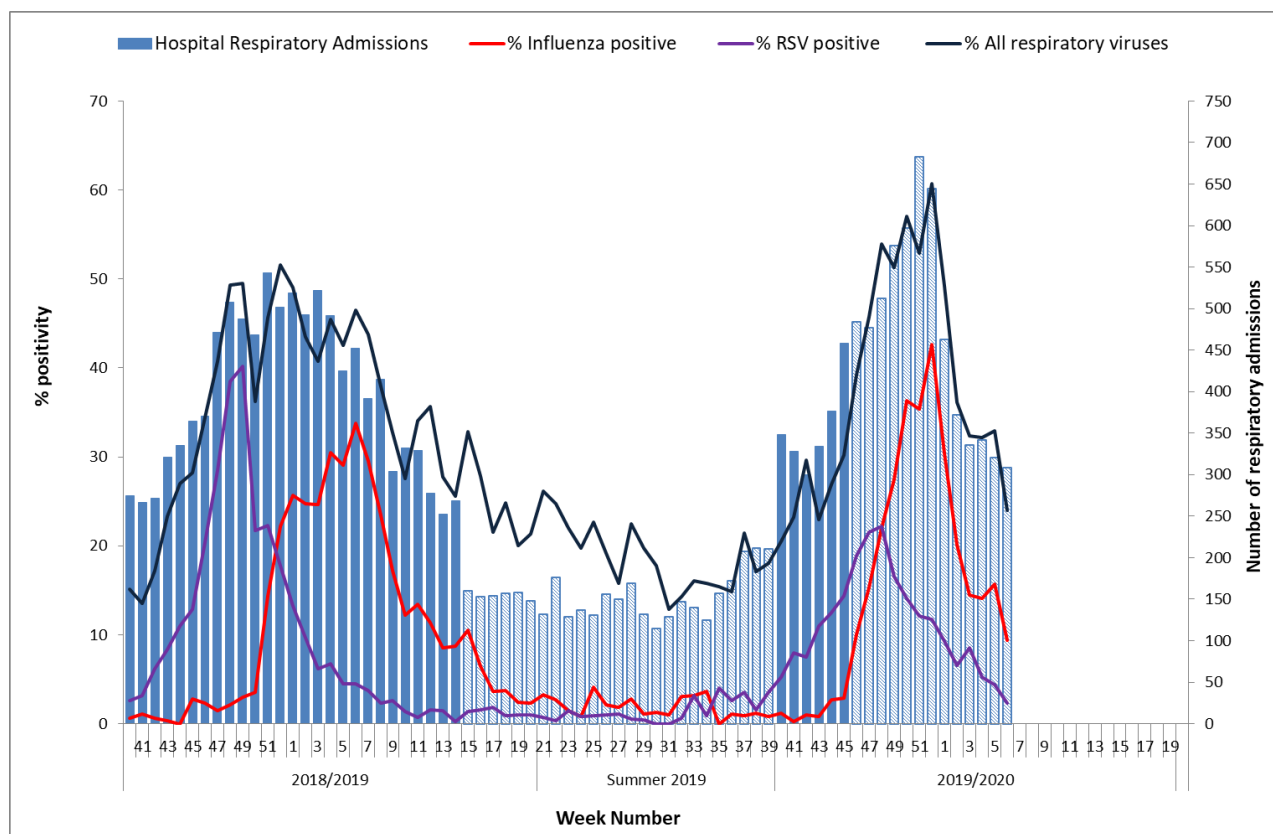


Figure 8: Number of respiratory admissions reported from the sentinel hospital network and % positivity for influenza, RSV and all seasonal respiratory viruses tested* by the NVRL by week and season. Source: Departments of Public Health - Sentinel Hospitals & NVRL. *All seasonal respiratory viruses tested refer to non-sentinel respiratory specimens routinely tested by the NVRL including influenza, RSV, adenovirus, parainfluenza viruses and human metapneumovirus (hMPV). Weeks with missing data are represented by the hatched bar.

4. GP Out-Of-Hours services surveillance

The Department of Public Health in HSE-NE is collating national data on calls to nine of thirteen GP Out-of-Hours services in Ireland. Records with clinical symptoms reported as flu or influenza are extracted for analysis. This information may act as an early indicator of increased ILI activity. However, data are self-reported by callers and are not based on coded influenza diagnoses.

The proportion of influenza-related calls to GP Out-of-Hours services was 2.3% during week 6 2020, similar to 2.2% in week 5 2020. Five services reported data for week 6 and there were 246 calls relating to self-reported influenza (figure 9).

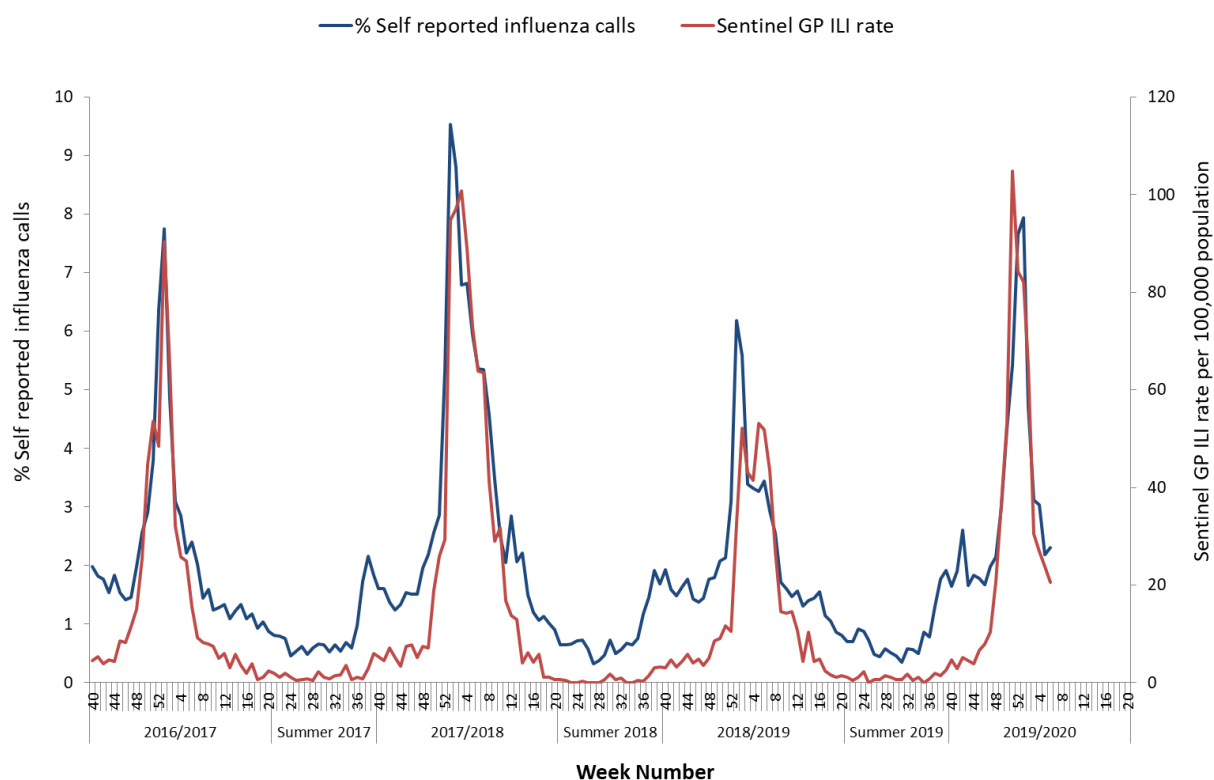


Figure 9: Self-reported influenza-related calls as a proportion of total calls to Out-of-Hours GP Co-ops and sentinel GP ILI consultation rate per 100,000 population by week and season. *Source: GP Out-Of-Hours services in Ireland (collated by HSE-NE) & ICGP.*

5. Influenza & RSV notifications

Influenza and RSV cases notifications are reported on Ireland’s Computerised Infectious Disease Reporting System (CIDR), including all positive influenza/RSV specimens reported from all laboratories testing for influenza/RSV and reporting to CIDR.

Influenza and RSV notifications are reported in the [Weekly Infectious Disease Report for Ireland](#).

- Influenza notifications decreased slightly to 288 during week 6 2020, compared to 299 during week 5 2020.
- Of the 288 cases notified during week 6 2020, 10 were due to influenza A(H3N2), 19 were due to influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, 118 were due to influenza A (not subtyped), and 141 were due to influenza B.
- To date this season, 8,502 confirmed cases of influenza have been notified to HPSC; 89% (n=7,565) were influenza A, 11% (n=923) were influenza B and the influenza type was not known for <1% (n=14). Of the 1,999 subtyped cases of influenza A, 86% (n=1,711) were A(H3N2) and 14% (n=288) were A(H1N1)pdm09. Influenza A(H3N2) dominated for most of this season, but increases in influenza B have been observed in recent weeks and influenza A and B co-dominated in weeks 4, 5 and 6 2020.
- During week 6 2020, 101 RSV cases were notified. This was a small decrease compared to the 111 cases notified in week 5 2020.

Although the number of influenza and RSV cases notified peaked in week 1 and 2 2020, a review of the notification data shows that these increases were due to delayed notifications. Analysis of the notified cases by symptom onset date/laboratory specimen collection date indicates that it is likely that influenza peaked in week 51 and 52 2019 while RSV peaked during weeks 48 to 51 2019 (see figures 10 & 11 in appendix 1).

6. Influenza Hospitalisations

- 79 confirmed influenza hospitalised cases were notified to HPSC during week 6 2020. Of these, two were due to influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, one was due to influenza A(H3N2), 42 were due to influenza A (not subtyped), and 34 were due to influenza B.
- For the 2019/2020 season to date, 3,323 confirmed influenza hospitalised cases have been notified to HPSC; 93% were due to influenza A (n=3,076) and 7% were due to influenza B (n=242). The influenza type was not reported for the remaining five cases (<1%). Of the 595 influenza A viruses subtyped, 88% (n=526) were A(H3N2) and 12% (n=69) were A(H1N1)pdm09.
- Age specific rates for hospitalised influenza cases are reported in table 4, with the highest rates reported in adults aged 65 years and older and in children aged less than 1 year.

7. Critical Care Surveillance

The Intensive Care Society of Ireland (ICSI) and the HSE Critical Care Programme are continuing with the enhanced surveillance system set up during the 2009 pandemic, on all critical care patients with confirmed influenza. HPSC processes and reports on this information on behalf of the regional Directors of Public Health/Medical Officers of Health.

- Two confirmed influenza cases were admitted to critical care units and reported to HPSC during week 6 2020.
- During the 2019/2020 season to date, 123 confirmed influenza cases have been reported as having been admitted to ICU. Of those, 28 were due to influenza A (H3N2), 10 were due to A(H1N1)pdm09, 79 were due to influenza A (not subtyped) and 6 were due to influenza B.
- Of the cases admitted to ICU, 56% were aged 65 years and older. The age specific rates for admission to critical care are shown in table 4.

Table 4: Age specific rates for confirmed influenza cases hospitalised and admitted to critical care during the 2019/2020 influenza season to date. Age specific rates are based on the 2016 CSO census.

| Age (years) | Hospitalised | | Admitted to ICU | |
|--------------|--------------|--|-----------------|--|
| | Number | Age specific rate per 100,000 population | Number | Age specific rate per 100,000 population |
| <1 | 142 | 228.1 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 1-4 | 377 | 140.0 | 4 | 1.5 |
| 5-14 | 405 | 60.0 | 6 | 0.9 |
| 15-24 | 144 | 25.0 | 4 | 0.7 |
| 25-34 | 153 | 23.2 | 2 | 0.3 |
| 35-44 | 146 | 19.5 | 6 | 0.8 |
| 45-54 | 138 | 22.0 | 8 | 1.3 |
| 55-64 | 269 | 52.9 | 24 | 4.7 |
| >65 | 1,548 | 242.8 | 69 | 10.8 |
| Age unknown | 1 | - | 0 | - |
| Total | 3,323 | 69.8 | 123 | 2.6 |

8. Mortality Surveillance

Influenza-associated deaths include all deaths where influenza is reported as the primary/main cause of death by the physician or if influenza is listed anywhere on the death certificate as the cause of death. HPSC receives daily mortality data from the General Register Office (GRO) on all deaths from all causes registered in Ireland. These data have been used to monitor excess all-cause and influenza and pneumonia deaths as part of the influenza surveillance system and the European Mortality Monitoring Project. These data are provisional due to the time delay in deaths' registration in Ireland. <http://www.euromomo.eu/>

- Three influenza-associated deaths were reported during week 6 2020. To date this season, 85 influenza-associated deaths were reported to HPSC. Seventy (82%) of the deaths occurred in adults aged 65 years and older, twelve (14%) were in adults aged between 35 and 64 years and three (4%) occurred in children aged less than 15 years.
- Excess all-cause mortality was reported in Ireland, in adults aged 65 years and older, during weeks 51 & 52 2019 and weeks 1 & 2 2020 (mid-December to mid-January) after correcting GRO data for reporting delays with the standardised EuroMOMO algorithm.

9. Outbreak Surveillance

- Three influenza outbreaks were reported to HPSC during week 6 2020.
- Influenza and acute respiratory outbreaks reported during the influenza 2019/2020 season to date are summarised by HSE area and by pathogen detected in tables 5 and 6.

Table 5: Summary of respiratory outbreaks by HSE area and disease during 2019/2020 season *Source: CIDR*

| HSE area | Influenza | Respiratory syncytial virus infection | Acute respiratory infection | Total |
|--------------|------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|
| HSE-E | 30 | 2 | 11 | 43 |
| HSE-M | 9 | 0 | 3 | 12 |
| HSE-MW | 10 | 2 | 0 | 12 |
| HSE-NE | 5 | 1 | 1 | 7 |
| HSE-NW | 2 | 1 | 2 | 5 |
| HSE-SE | 17 | 0 | 7 | 24 |
| HSE-S | 11 | 0 | 3 | 14 |
| HSE-W | 17 | 0 | 1 | 18 |
| Total | 101 | 6 | 28 | 135 |

Table 6: Summary of respiratory outbreaks by outbreak location & pathogen during 2019/2020 season Source: CIDR

| Outbreak location | Organism/Pathogen | Total |
|---|---|------------|
| Nursing home/Community hospital/Long-stay unit/Residential institution | Influenza A | 33 |
| | Influenza A (H3N2) | 11 |
| | Influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 | 1 |
| | Influenza B | 2 |
| | Influenza (type not reported) | 27 |
| | RSV | 3 |
| | Rhino/enterovirus | 2 |
| | Coronavirus and Rhinovirus | 1 |
| | Coronavirus | 1 |
| | Human Metapneumovirus and Rhinovirus | 1 |
| | RSV and human metapneumovirus | 1 |
| | Human metapneumovirus | 1 |
| | Parainfluenza | 1 |
| | Acute respiratory infection, organism not specified | 13 |
| Nursing home/Community hospital/Long-stay unit/Residential institution Total | | 98 |
| Acute Hospital | Influenza A | 14 |
| | Influenza A(H3N2) | 1 |
| | Influenza A(H3N2) & human metapneumovirus | 1 |
| | Influenza A & B | 1 |
| | Influenza B | 1 |
| | Influenza (type not reported) | 6 |
| | RSV | 2 |
| | Acute respiratory infection, organism not specified | 1 |
| Acute Hospital Total | | 27 |
| School or childcare facility | Influenza A | 2 |
| | RSV | 1 |
| | Acute respiratory infection, organism not specified | 7 |
| School or Childcare Facility Total | | 10 |
| Total | | 135 |

10. International Summary

In the Europe Union, during week 5 2020, influenza activity continued to increase, with a number of Member States reporting very high (n=4) and high (n=5) intensity. Widespread influenza activity was reported by the majority of Member States and areas across the Region. Both influenza virus types A and B were co-circulating in sentinel source specimens with a higher proportion (65%) of type A viruses detected. Of the type A detections, A(H1N1)pdm09 viruses were detected more often (64%) and of the influenza B viruses, the vast majority (99%) were B/Victoria lineage. The distribution of viruses detected varied between Member States and areas and within sub-regions. Although the majority of reported influenza virus detections across the Region were type A, four Member States reported influenza type B dominance and eight Member States and areas reported co-dominance of types A and B viruses.

For the European Region as a whole, influenza activity commenced earlier than in recent years. Influenza activity in the European Region, based on sentinel sampling, first exceeded a positivity rate of 10% in week 47/2019. The positivity rate exceeded 50% in week 04/2020. In sentinel sources, both influenza A virus subtypes, A(H1N1)pdm09 and A(H3N2), are co-circulating, 60% and 40% respectively. Increased influenza virus subtype A(H1N1)pdm09 detections have been reported since week 52/2019. Of the influenza B viruses, the vast majority (99%) have been B/Victoria lineage.

Pooled estimates of all-cause mortality show a small tendency of excess mortality over the past few weeks in some of the countries or regions participating in the EuroMOMO project.

In the temperate zone of the northern hemisphere, respiratory illness indicators and influenza activity remained elevated overall. In Europe, influenza activity continued to increase across the region but appeared to decrease in some countries of Northern Europe. Worldwide, seasonal influenza A viruses accounted for the majority of detections.

National Influenza Centres (NICs) and other national influenza laboratories from 111 countries, areas or territories reported data to FluNet for the time period from 6 to 19 January 2020. The WHO GISRS laboratories tested more than 130,830 specimens during that time period. A total of 33,190 were positive for influenza viruses, of which 23,283 (70%) were typed as influenza A and 9,907 (30%) as influenza B. Of the sub-typed influenza A viruses, 7,834 (59%) were influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 and 5,478 (41%) were influenza A(H3N2). Of the characterized B viruses, 2,925 (99%) to the B-Victoria lineage and 42 (1%) belonged to the B-Yamagata lineage.

Information on the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) associated with Wuhan, China is available on the [ECDC](#) and [WHO](#) websites. ECDC has also produced Rapid Risk Assessments which are available on the [ECDC](#) website. The [HPSC](#) has a dedicated webpage on novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV), which is updated regularly.

- Further information is available on the following websites:
 - Northern Ireland <http://www.fluawareni.info/>
 - Flu News Europe <http://flunewseurope.org/>
 - Public Health England <http://www.hpa.org.uk/Topics/InfectiousDiseases/InfectionsAZ/SeasonalInfluenza/>
 - United States CDC <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/fluactivitysurv.htm>
 - Public Health Agency of Canada <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/fluwatch/index-eng.php>
- Information on Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS), including the latest ECDC rapid risk assessment is available on the [ECDC website](#). Further information and guidance documents are also available on the [HPSC](#) and [WHO](#) websites.
- Further information on avian influenza is available on the [ECDC website](#). The latest ECDC rapid risk assessment on highly pathogenic avian influenza A of H5 type is also available on the [ECDC website](#).

11. WHO recommendations on the composition of influenza virus vaccines

Ireland has changed from using trivalent vaccine to using quadrivalent vaccine for the 2019/2020 influenza season. Quadrivalent vaccines include a 2nd influenza B virus in addition to the 2 influenza A viruses found in trivalent vaccines.

The WHO vaccine strain selection committee recommend that quadrivalent vaccines for use in the 2019/2020 northern hemisphere influenza season contain the following:

- an A/Brisbane/02/2018 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus;
- an A/Kansas/14/2017 (H3N2)-like virus;
- a B/Colorado/06/2017-like virus (B/Victoria/2/87 lineage); and
- a B/Phuket/3073/2013-like virus (B/Yamagata/16/88 lineage).

It is recommended that the influenza B virus component of trivalent vaccines for use in the 2019-2020 northern hemisphere influenza season be a B/Colorado/06/2017-like virus.

https://www.who.int/influenza/vaccines/virus/recommendations/201902_recommendation.pdf

https://www.who.int/influenza/vaccines/virus/recommendations/201902_recommendation_addendum.pdf

Further information on influenza in Ireland is available at www.hpsc.ie

Acknowledgements

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Appendix 1

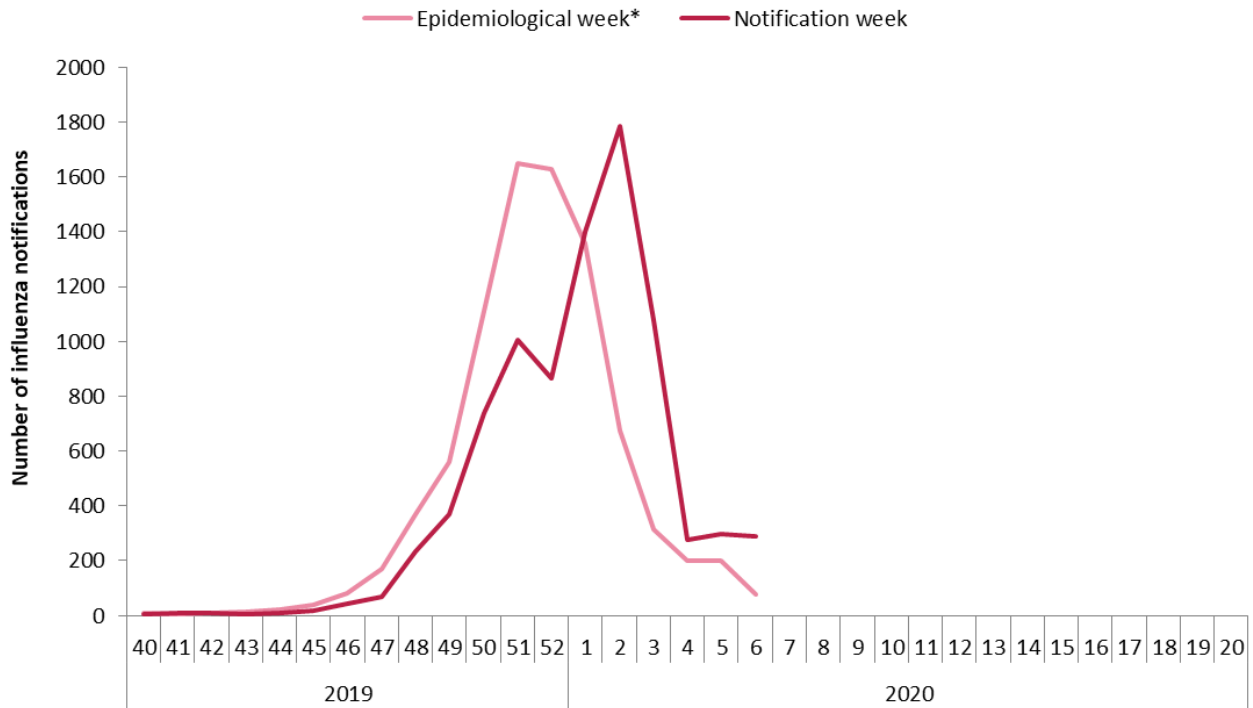


Figure 10: Number of notifications of laboratory confirmed cases of influenza reported on CIDR, by week of notification (based on the date the case was created on CIDR) and epidemiological week (based on earliest available date: date of disease onset, specimen collected date, date of diagnosis or date of notification). Source: CIDR

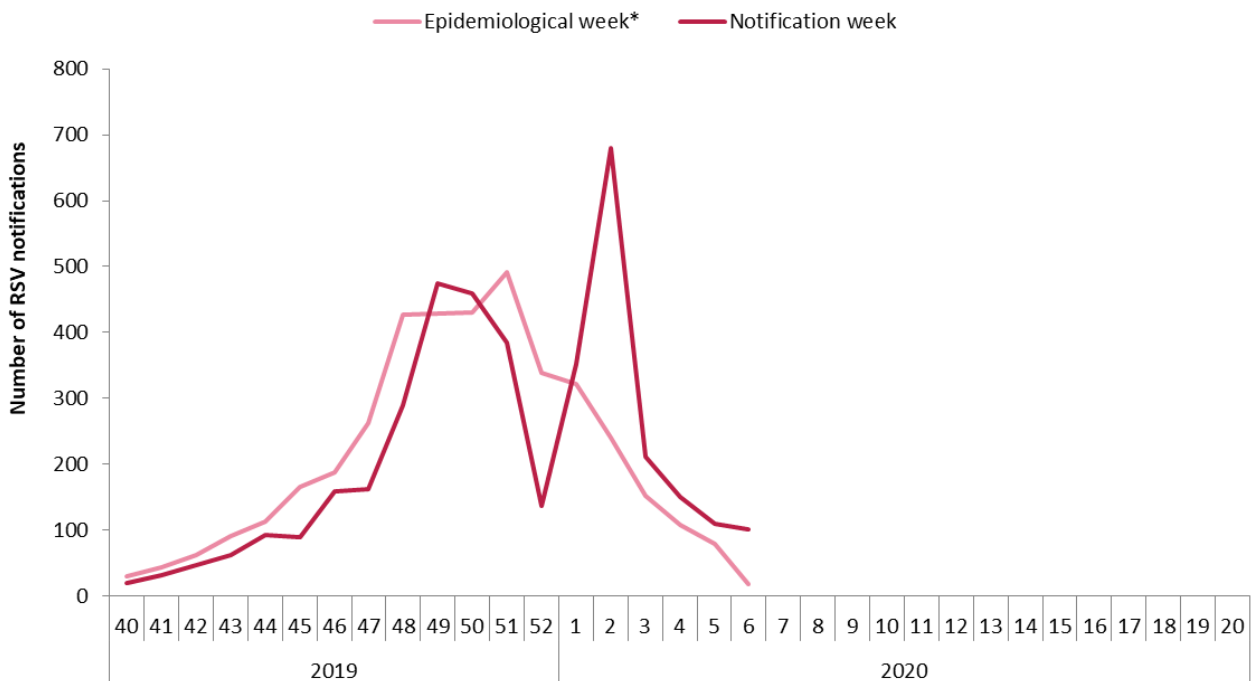


Figure 11: Number of notifications of RSV reported on CIDR, by week of notification (based on the date the case was created on CIDR) and epidemiological week (based on earliest available date: date of disease onset, specimen collected date, date of diagnosis or date of notification). Source: CIDR