

Influenza Surveillance in Ireland – Weekly Report

Influenza Week 21 2020 (18th May – 24th May 2020)



Summary

The sentinel GP Influenza-like illness (ILI) consultation rate slightly increased during week 21 2020 to 16.4 per 100,000 compared to an updated rate 15.8 per 100,000 in week 20 2020. The elevated rate in recent weeks is reflective of the current COVID-19 pandemic rather than influenza activity. Please see [HPSC COVID-19 webpage](#) for current reports on COVID-19 activity in Ireland. Testing for influenza has been reduced significantly due to the need to allocate resources to the COVID-19 pandemic response.

Influenza-like illness (ILI): The sentinel GP influenza-like illness (ILI) consultation rate was 16.4 per 100,000 population in week 21 2020 and remains below baseline for three continuous weeks (04/05/2020-24/05/2020) (figure 1).

- During week 21, 51 (85%) of the 60 sentinel GP practices reported data (262,038 reporting population)
- ILI age specific rate was highest in those aged ≥ 65 years (31.4/100,000) 15-64 years (15.7/100,000) and lowest in those aged 5-14 years (13.5/100,000) and was not reported in those aged 0-4 years.
- On the 09/03/2020, GP consultations for ILI changed from face to face consultations to phone consultations. Since the 7th May, all cases with at least one of the following: cough, fever, shortness of breath are referred for COVID-19 testing, and categories for priority testing no longer applied. Please refer to HPSC [COVID-19 case definition](#) webpage for further information.
- GP Out of Hours: The proportion of influenza-related calls to GP Out-of-Hours services was 0.2% and remains at low levels. Two services provided data for Week 21 (figure 3)
- National Virus Reference Laboratory (NVRL)
 - No influenza positive non-sentinel specimens were reported by the NVRL (73 samples were tested) during week 21 2020 or for the previous six weeks.
 - Due to the testing demand of COVID-19, influenza testing in sentinel GP specimens ceased at the end of March and specimens are being tested retrospectively.
- Hospitalisations and Critical Care admissions: During week 21 2020, the HPSC received no notifications for confirmed influenza hospitalisations or admissions to ICU. For the 2019/2020 season to date, 4327 confirmed influenza hospitalised cases have been notified and 152 confirmed influenza cases have been reported as admitted to ICU.
- Influenza notifications: During week 21, two influenza B cases were notified, both cases were late notifications (week 11). For the 2019/2020 season to date, 11,116 confirmed influenza cases have been notified to HPSC.
- Mortality: During week 21, no deaths in notified influenza cases were reported to HPSC. During the 2019/2020 season to date, 105 deaths have been reported to HPSC in notified influenza cases.
- Outbreaks: No outbreaks of influenza were reported to the HPSC during week 20 2020. During the 2019/2020 season to date, 107 influenza outbreaks were reported to HPSC.
- International: For international updates on influenza activity in the European Regions please refer to [ECDC](#) and [Flu News Europe](#). For updates on the current influenza epidemiological and virology data from WHO please refer to [WHO](#)
 - WHO vaccine strain selection committee issued recommendations for the composition of influenza virus vaccines for use in the 2020-2021 northern hemisphere influenza season, please see [WHO Vaccine Recommendations](#) for further information.

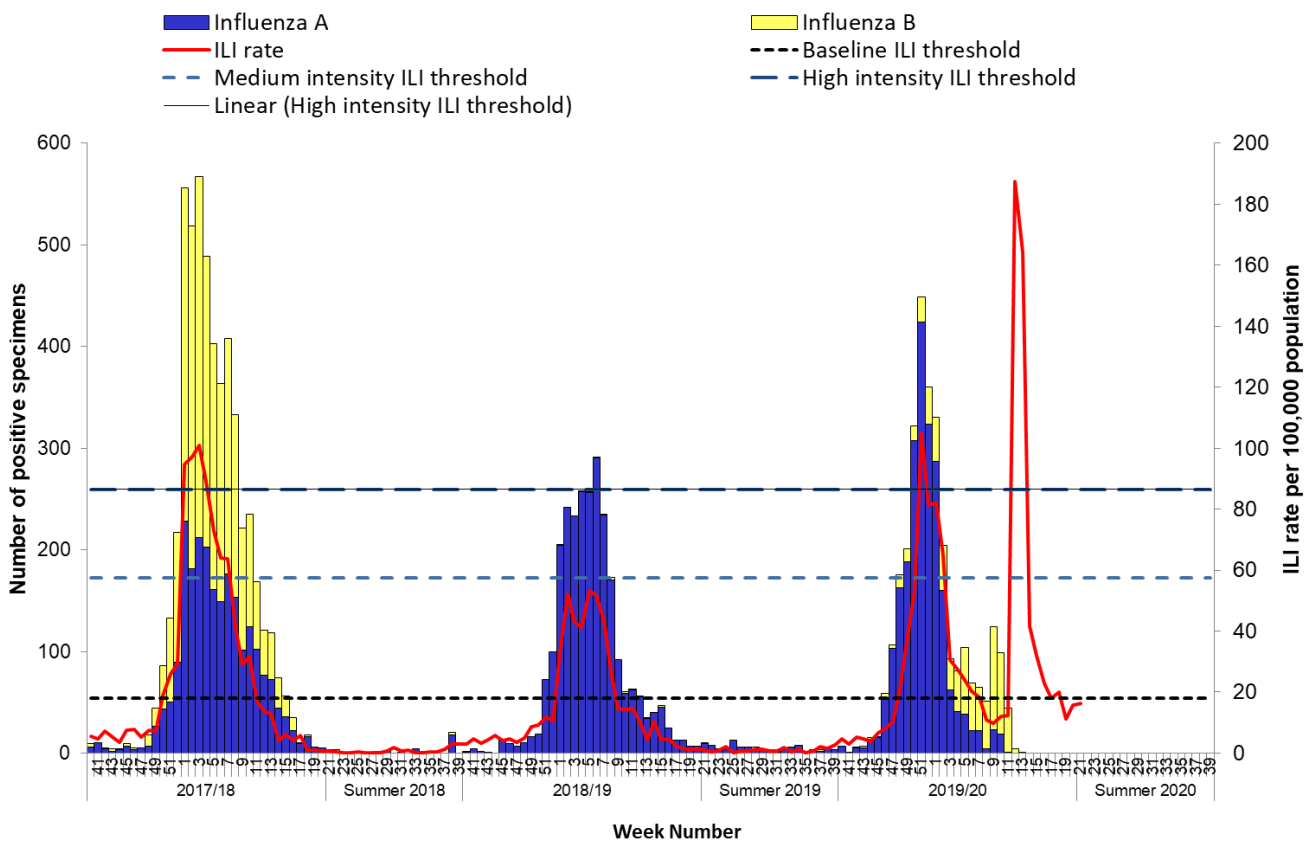


Figure 1: ILI sentinel GP consultation rates per 100,000 population, baseline ILI threshold, medium and high intensity ILI thresholds* and number of positive influenza A and B specimens tested by the NVRL, by influenza week and season. Source: ICGP and NVRL

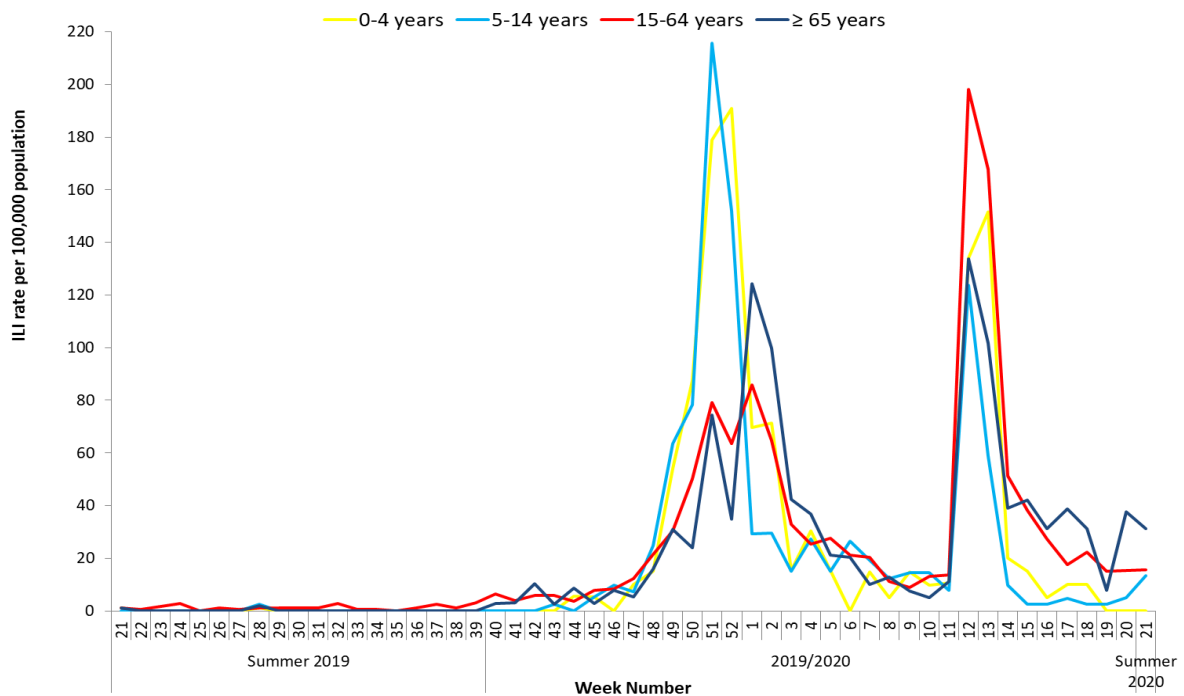


Figure 2: Age specific sentinel GP ILI consultation rate per 100,000 population by week during the summer of 2019 and the 2019/2020 influenza season to date. Source: ICGP

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

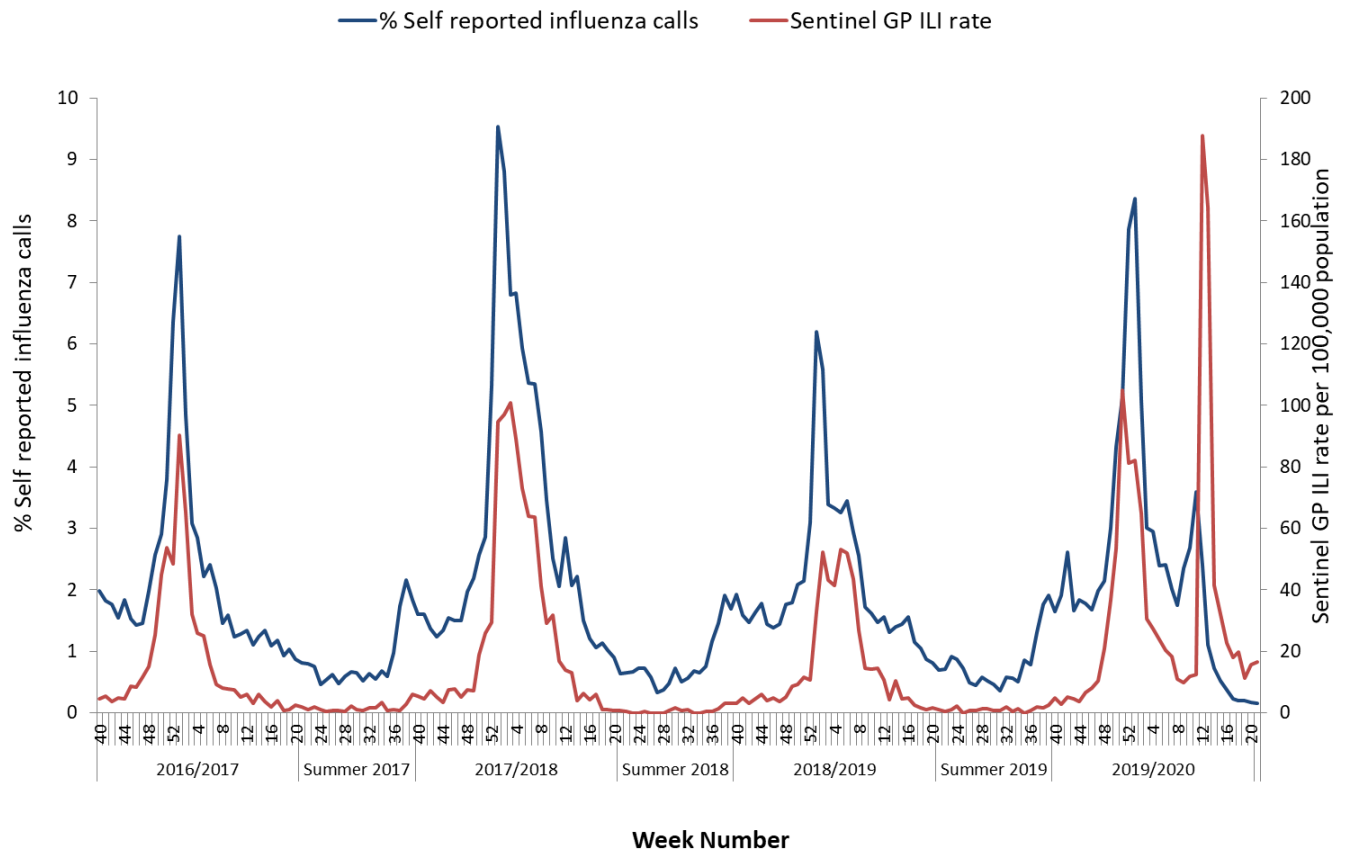


Figure 3: Self-reported influenza-related calls as a proportion of total calls to Out-of-Hours GP Co-ops and sentinel GP ILI consultation rate per 100,000 population by week and season. *Source: GP Out-Of-Hours services in Ireland (collated by HSE-NE) & ICGP.*

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

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