

Influenza Surveillance in Ireland – Summary Report

Weeks 34 -36 2011 (22nd August – 11th September 2011)



During the summer period, a short summary report of influenza activity will be published every fortnight. In the event of influenza activity increasing a full report will be published on a weekly basis.

Summary

- All indicators of influenza activity in Ireland have continued to remain at low levels.
- The sentinel GP influenza-like illness (ILI) consultation rates remained low and below baseline levels during weeks 34, 35 and 36 2011.
 - The ILI consultation rate was 0.8 per 100,000 population in week 34 2011, 2.1 per 100,000 in week 35 2011 and 2.3 per 100,000 in week 36 2011. ILI rates in all age groups were at low levels.
- The proportion of influenza-related calls to GP Out-of-Hours services has remained at low levels.
- No positive influenza specimens were detected by the National Virus Reference Laboratory (NVRL) from sentinel or non-sentinel sources during weeks 34 to 36 2011. To date this summer, one confirmed influenza positive specimen has been detected, an influenza A (H3) case from sentinel sources during week 31 2011. It is not unusual to detect sporadic cases during the summer period.
- There have been no reports of confirmed influenza cases admitted to hospital or of any influenza-associated deaths occurring during the summer period.
- No new general outbreaks of influenza/ILI have been reported since week 5 2011.
- During weeks 34, 35 and 36 2011, the NVRL tested 130 non-sentinel respiratory specimens, three were positive for adenovirus and one was positive for parainfluenza virus type 3 (PIV-3). There have been sporadic reports of adenovirus, RSV, PIV-1, PIV-2 and PIV-3 during the summer period. The predominant virus detected this summer has been PIV-3.
- As of 9th September 2011, countries in the temperate regions of the northern hemisphere reported low or undetectable influenza activity. The USA recently reported four human cases of swine influenza A (H3N2) containing a novel reassortment with an M gene derived from influenza A (H1N1) 2009. The virus is similar to one that has been circulating in swine since 1998 and which has been previously identified in eight human cases. The virus does not appear to have spread widely in humans; however, investigations are ongoing. Influenza activity in the tropical zone was mostly low with the exception of a few countries of the Americas (Cuba and Honduras), Western Africa (Cameroon and Senegal) and Southern Asia (Bangladesh and Thailand) that reported continued transmission. In South America, the influenza season has been mild and has peaked with variation in the predominant type and subtype of virus circulating in different countries in the area. Influenza activity may have peaked nationally in Australia, although regional increases are still being reported. A cluster of 25 cases of oseltamivir-resistant influenza A (H1N1) 2009 was recently reported in New South Wales, Australia. The cases occurred in a limited geographic area, over a three month period of time. None of the cases interviewed had previous exposure to oseltamivir or had other risk factors associated with the development of oseltamivir resistance. This represents the largest cluster of oseltamivir resistant viruses to date and the most persistent period of community transmission. Investigations into this cluster are ongoing. <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/influenza/en/>

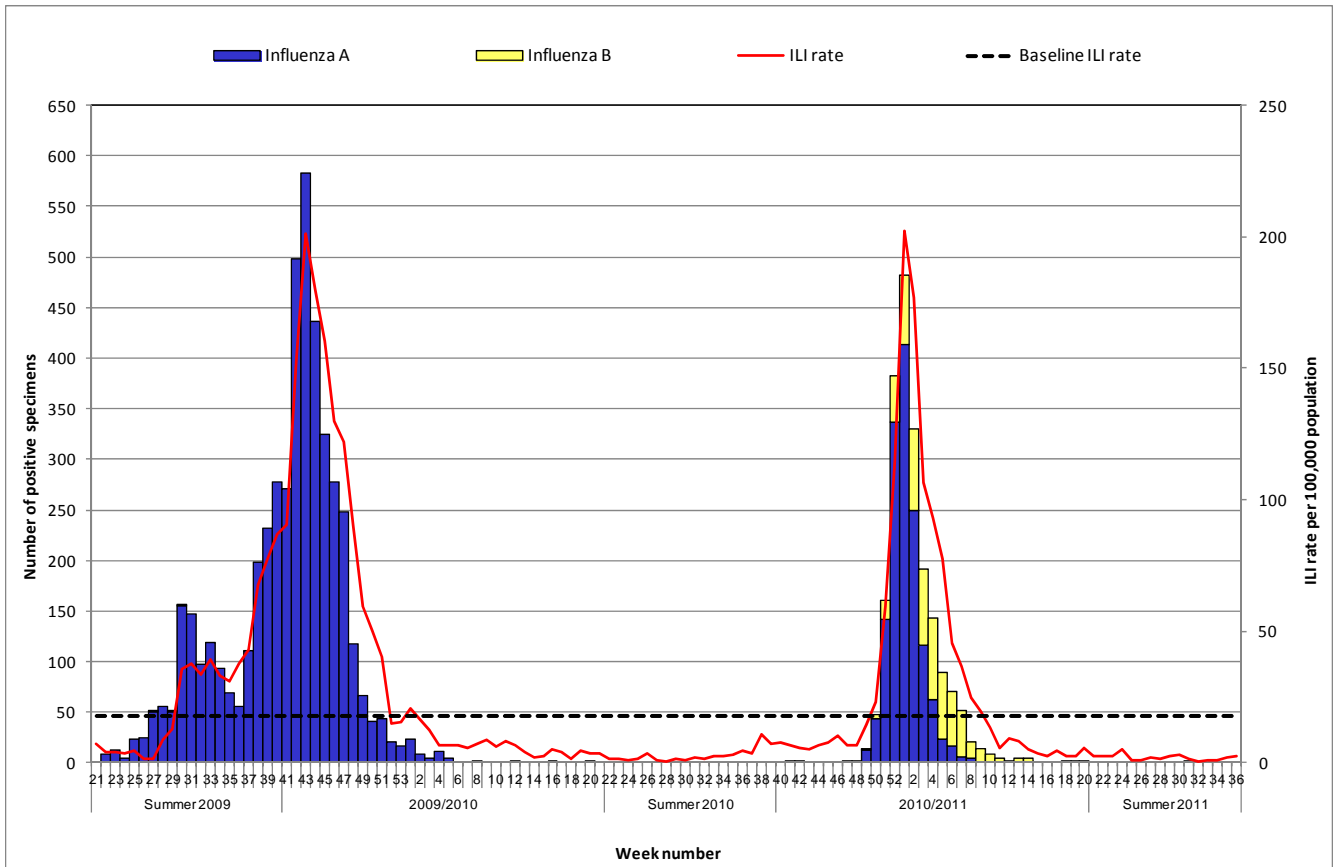


Figure 1. ILI sentinel GP consultation rates per 100,000 population, baseline ILI threshold rate, and number of positive influenza A and B specimens tested by the NVRL, by influenza week and season.

Source: Clinical ILI data from ICGP and virological data from the NVRL^{††}

Further information on influenza in Ireland and internationally can be found on the following websites:

- Ireland www.hpsc.ie
- Northern Ireland <http://www.cdscni.org.uk/>
- UK – HPA <http://www.hpa.org.uk/Topics/InfectiousDiseases/InfectionsAZ/Influenza/>
- Europe – ECDC <http://ecdc.europa.eu/>
- Europe – EISN <http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/activities/surveillance/EISN/Pages/home.aspx>

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* Please note that in addition to the NVRL, Cork University Hospital (CUH) and Galway University Hospital(s) (GUH) also tested for influenza A (H1N1) 2009 during the pandemic period.

† Sentinel GP consultations and virological data are updated on an ongoing basis, ILI rates and virological data are adjusted accordingly.