



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive



Addendum to Mortality Data reported in ‘Summary Report of Influenza Season 2005/2006’

The HPSC ‘Summary Report of Influenza Season 2005/2006’ stated that “3,567 pneumonia and influenza deaths (20.0% of all deaths) were registered with the General Register Office (GRO) during the 2005/2006 season’. These “pneumonia and influenza” deaths included all deaths where either influenza or pneumonia was listed as the disease or condition leading to death, or the antecedent cause(s) or other significant conditions. (Aspiration pneumonia, pneumonitis and pneumococcal meningitis were excluded).

International studies have shown that influenza causes significant morbidity and mortality every year. This mortality occurs mainly in the elderly. However, excess deaths (deaths over and above the expected number of deaths for the particular season, place and time) are often not registered specifically as influenza deaths. Only a small number of deaths are registered each year as being due to influenza. It has been shown that the increase in respiratory deaths correlate closely with the increase in deaths due to influenza. Therefore monitoring trends in pneumonia and influenza deaths can be used as a proxy for monitoring trends in influenza-non-attributed deaths. HPSC currently monitors all cause mortality, and mortality due to pneumonia and influenza on a weekly basis using national non-coded death registration data from the GRO.

The current best Irish national estimate of the number of deaths annually from influenza and its complications is 300-400 deaths per year and is based on extrapolation of studies done in the UK and the US.

Further information on influenza is available on the HPSC website www.hpsc.ie

References available on request

6th September 2007