

Influenza

In the first 14 weeks of 2013, 78 specimens were received from Viral Watch sites: 39 were taken at the time of entry into South Africa from abroad, 26 submitted from sites in Gauteng Province, six from Eastern Cape Province, three each from Mpumalanga and Western Cape provinces and one from Limpopo Province. No influenza isolates were detected from patients without a history of recent

travel abroad. In this same time period (January to 7 April 2013), 848 patients with severe acute respiratory illness (SARI) were tested at the five sentinel SARI sites. Influenza A unsubtype and influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 were detected in one patient each from KwaZulu-Natal Province, and influenza B in one patient from North West Province (Table).

Table. Cumulative number of identified influenza types and subtypes and total number of samples collected at SARI sentinel site hospitals

Hospital	A unsubtype	A(H1N1)pdm09	A(H3N2)	B	Total samples
Chris Hani Baragwanath (GP)	0	0	0	0	238
Edendale (KZN)	1	1	0	0	254
Klerksdorp-Tshepong (NWP)	0	0	0	1	241
Mapulaneng (MP)	0	0	0	0	54
Matikwane (MP)	0	0	0	0	61
Total:	1	1	0	1	848

The average onset of the season over the past 8 years has been the last week of May.

As the influenza season approaches, the public is encouraged to go for influenza vaccination. Influenza vaccination is currently available at public clinics and private pharmacies. Clinicians are reminded to vaccinate individuals that are in the risk groups targeted for influenza vaccination. Recommendations on target groups, dosages and contraindications for the 2013 influenza vaccine

were published in the March issue of the NICD Communiqué_Vol 11 (12), available at (<http://www.nicd.ac.za/?page=communiqué&id=56>) and the February 2013 edition of the South African Medical Journal, available at: (<http://www.samj.org.za/index.php/samj/article/view/6435/4855>).

Source: Centre for Respiratory Diseases and Meningitis, NICD-NHLS.