

2 SEASONAL DISEASES

a Influenza

Influenza data from Viral Watch

The influenza season that started in epidemiologic week 19 (week ending 10 May) continues. The number of specimens submitted by Viral Watch sites have continued to increase and have risen to an average of 75 per week during the last week of May and the first two weeks of June.

To date (10 June), influenza has been detected in 200/440 (45%) of specimens submitted by Viral Watch sites. Influenza A (untyped as yet) has been detected in one patient, influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 in 112, influenza A(H3N2) in 77, and influenza B virus in 10 patients (Figure 5). In addition, 27 specimens have been received from patients at a point of entry into South Africa; influenza was detected in 17 of these patients. So far, the predominant strain circulating in 2015 is the influenza A (H1N1)pdm09, which has been one of the influenza strains circulating every year, since 2010.

Influenza data from national syndromic surveillance for pneumonia programme

From 01 January to 10 June, 1494 specimens from patients admitted with severe respiratory illness were tested from the six sentinel sites in the national syndromic surveillance for pneumonia programme. Influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 was detected in 23, influenza A(H3N2) in 27, influenza A (untyped

as yet) in two and influenza B in six of these specimens. In addition, other respiratory viruses were detected in specimens of 561 patients; respiratory syncytial virus (257/561, 46%) accounted for the majority followed by rhinovirus (199/561, 35%).

Recommendations

Although the influenza season is well underway it is not too late to vaccinate for influenza. Healthcare workers are encouraged to vaccinate individuals in the groups that are targeted for influenza vaccination; this includes, among others, pregnant women at any stage of pregnancy, and those vulnerable due to underlying medical conditions or risk factors. Recommendations on target groups, dosages and contraindications for the 2015 influenza vaccine, and influenza antiviral treatment are available in the Healthcare Workers Handbook on influenza 2015, which can be accessed at:

<http://www.nicd.ac.za/assets/files/Healthcare%20Workers%20Handbook%20on%20influenza%20in%20SA%20May%202015.pdf>.

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

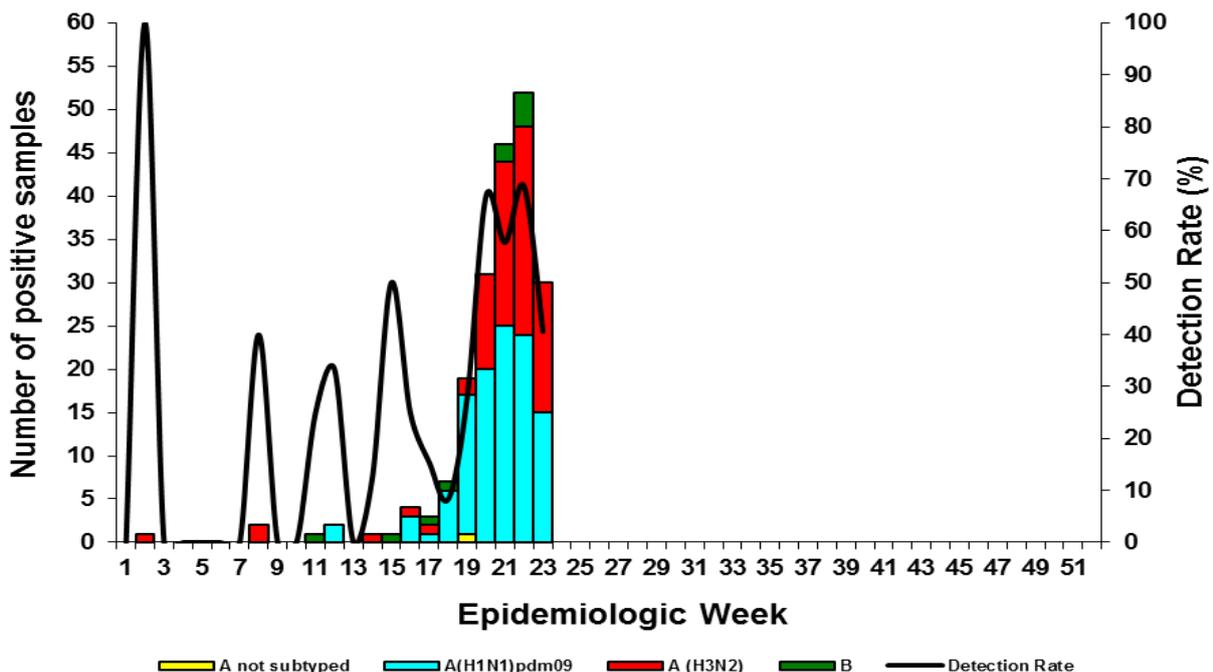


Figure 5. Number of positive samples by influenza types and subtypes and detection rate by week, Viral Watch programme, 2015