2 SEASONAL DISEASES

a Influenza

Influenza data from the Viral Watch Programme

The influenza season continues, though the number of specimens submitted by Viral Watch sites has declined as has the number of positive influenza results.

To date (10 September), influenza has been detected in 507/1039 (48.8%) of specimens submitted by Viral Watch sites. Influenza A(H1N1) pdm09 was the predominant type this season and has been detected in 255/507 (50.3%) patients, influenza A(H3N2) in 191/507 (37.7%), and influenza B virus in 61/507 (12%) patients. Since week 30 (week starting 20 July), the season has been dominated by influenza B virus, accounting for 40/49 (82%) influenza detections. Influenza B/ Yamagata strains, similar to the strain included in the 2015 vaccine dominated influenza B virus detections.

Genetic characterisation of influenza virus

Data from the influenza surveillance programmes show that reduced reactivity (4-fold or less) to the vaccine strain-specific antisera was observed for 7% of influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, 38% of influenza B/Yamagata and 72% of A(H3N2) viruses. Almost all influenza A(H3N2) viruses are in the 3C.2a genetic lineage, which is supposed to be cross-reactive with the A/Switzerland/ 9715293/2013 (in the 3C.3a lineage) vaccine strain-specific antisera. Influenza B viruses identified in 2015 are in B/ Yamagata clade 3 and thus genetically similar to the B/Phuket/3073/2013 vaccine strain. Information on the vaccine viruses recommended for the 2016 southern hemisphere influenza season will be available in October 2015.

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

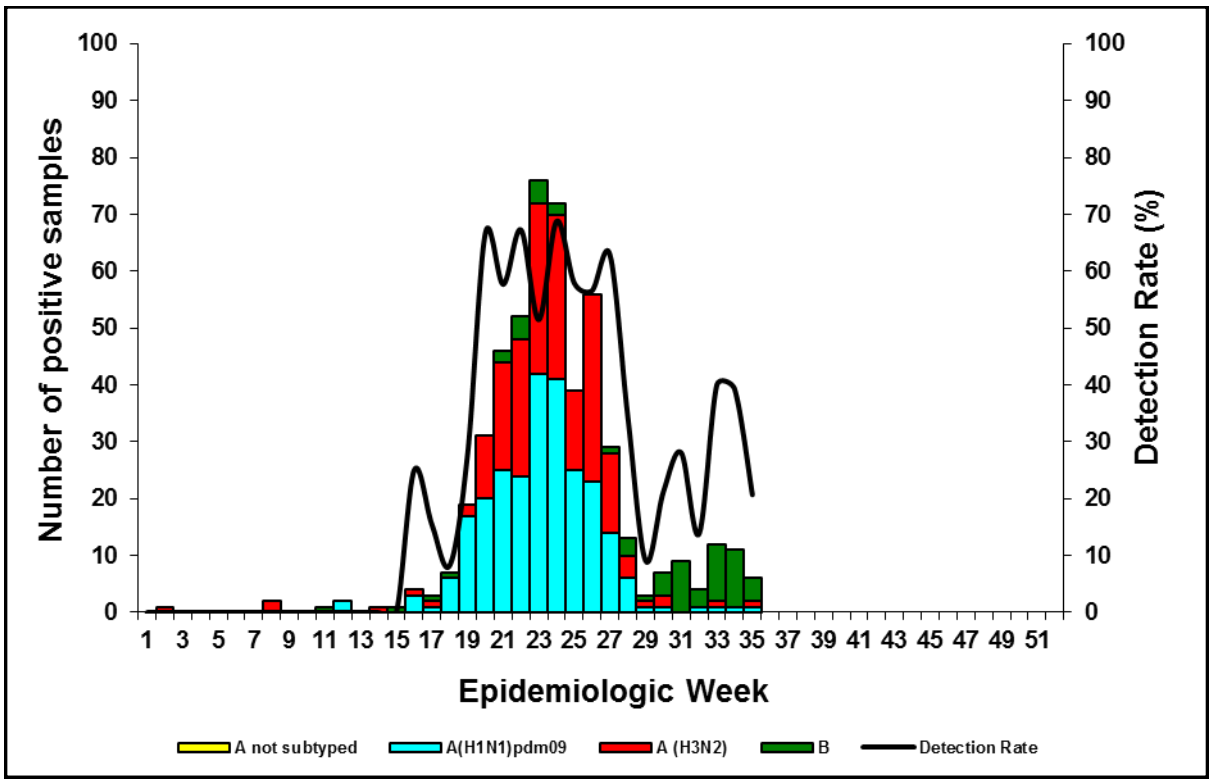

Figure 6. Number of positive samples by influenza types and subtypes and detection rate by week, Viral Watch programme, 2015