

1 SEASONAL DISEASES

a Influenza

Influenza data from Viral Watch Programme

The influenza season which started in week 19 (week ending 10 May) continues, though the number of specimens submitted by Viral Watch sites and the number of positive influenza results have declined (Figure 1). The peak of the season was in epidemiologic week 24 (week ending 24 June 2015). To date (14 August 2015), influenza has been detected in 455/935 (48.7%) of all specimens submitted by Viral Watch sites. Of these, influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 has been detected in 249, influenza A(H3N2) in 189, and influenza B virus in 28 patients, while a single strain of influenza A is still to be typed. 42 specimens have been received from patients at a point of entry into South Africa through the Viral Watch site stationed at OR Tambo International Airport, in which influenza was detected in 24 specimens.

Influenza data from the national syndromic surveillance for pneumonia

To date, 2,322 specimens from patients admitted with severe respiratory illness were tested from six

national syndromic surveillance for pneumonia programme surveillance sites. Of these 140 (6%) were positive for influenza. Influenza A (H1N1) pdm09 was detected in 56% (78/140), influenza A (H3N2) in 34% (48/140) and influenza B in 10% (14/140).

The vaccine viruses recommended by World Health Organization (WHO) for the 2015-16 northern hemisphere influenza season are the same as those for the current southern hemisphere season. Practitioners can advise patients who are planning to travel for Hajj in September that the influenza vaccine currently available in South Africa is formulated to protect against viral strains currently circulating in the northern hemisphere. The full report of the recommendations for the southern hemisphere influenza vaccine can be accessed at: www.who.int/influenza/vaccines/virus/recommendations/201502_recommendation.pdf

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

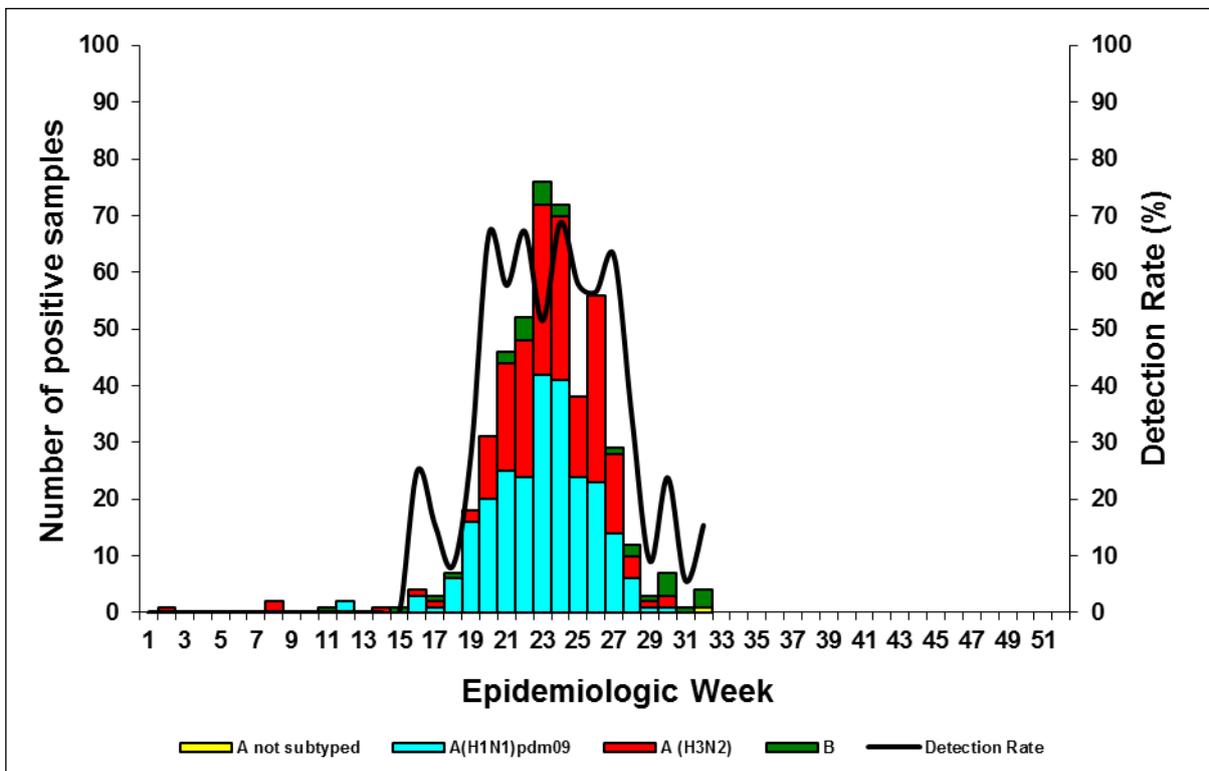


Figure 1. Number of positive samples by influenza types and subtypes and detection rate by week, Viral Watch programme, 2015