

**3 SEASONAL DISEASES**

**a The influenza season, South Africa, 2016**

The influenza season which started in week 19 (week ending 09 May) continues. The first part of the season was dominated by influenza B, with increasing detections of influenza A(H3N2) as the season progressed. Recently a number of influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 cases were detected. Influenza A (H1N1)pdm09 has been amongst strains isolated during the South African influenza season since 2010. The public often refer to this strain as “swine flu”. A number of enquiries have been made to the NICD regarding management and infection control of these cases. Influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 (“swine flu”) has become established in South Africa as seasonal influenza and should be managed as described in current seasonal influenza guidelines. (See Healthcare workers handbook on influenza in SA-2016 available at [www.nicd.ac.za](http://www.nicd.ac.za))

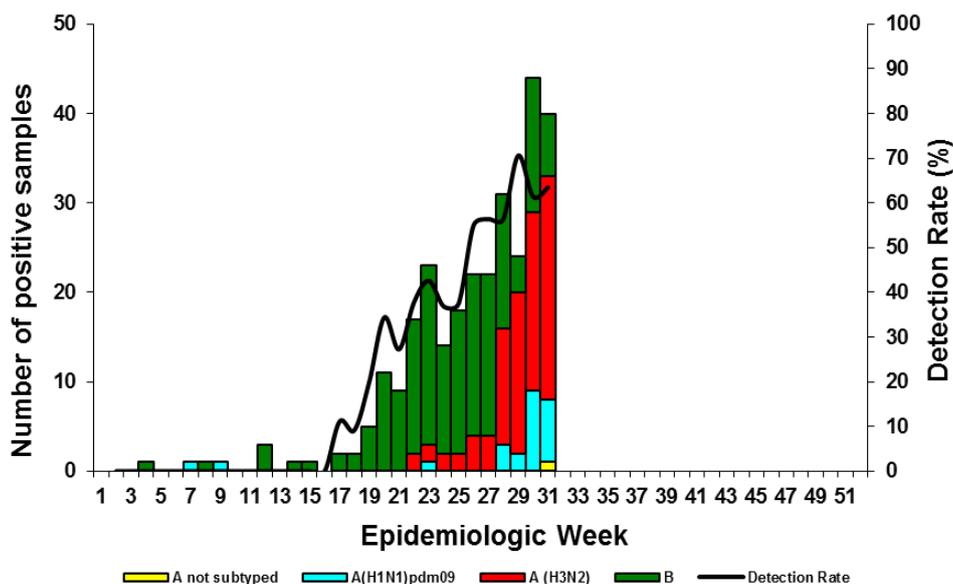
To date (07 August 2016), influenza has been detected in 41% (293/711) of samples received from patients presenting at Viral Watch sentinel surveillance sites with influenza-like illness. Influenza A (not subtyped) was detected in one patient, influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 in 24, influenza A (H3N2) in 92, and influenza B in 176 patients. During the same period, influenza was detected in 6% (123/2231) of patients hospitalised for severe respiratory illness at 6 sentinel sites. Amongst these

patients, influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 was detected in the specimens of five, influenza A(H3N2) in 26 and influenza B in 92 patients.

The NICD is aware of at least two schools that have experienced an outbreak of confirmed influenza infection. One of these has been extensively investigated and will be reported on in the next Communiqué. Institutional outbreaks of influenza are not uncommon, and can impact the functioning of institutions. Persons with underlying risk factors including pregnant women, the elderly and those with underlying illness should receive pre-season vaccination.

The vaccine viruses recommended by World Health Organization (WHO) for the 2016-17 northern hemisphere influenza season are the same as those for the current southern hemisphere season, and include influenza A and B strains. The full report of the recommendations for the southern influenza vaccine can be accessed at: [http://www.who.int/influenza/vaccines/virus/recommendations/201509\\_recommendation.pdf?ua=1](http://www.who.int/influenza/vaccines/virus/recommendations/201509_recommendation.pdf?ua=1)

**Source:** Centre for Respiratory Diseases and Meningitis, NICD-NHLS; (cherylc@nicd.ac.za)



**Figure 1.** The number of influenza detections made by province as identified through the NICD Viral Watch sentinel surveillance programme 2016