

3 SEASONAL DISEASES

a Seasonal influenza

The 2014 influenza season has not yet begun. The start of the annual influenza season has been defined as the week during which the influenza detection rate has risen to $\geq 10\%$ and is sustained for ≥ 2 consecutive weeks. To date, the influenza detection rate from Viral Watch surveillance programme sites has only risen above 10% sporadically, but not been sustained for ≥ 2 weeks.

The average week of influenza season onset over the past 30 years has been the last week of May (range last week of April to first week of July). However, the number of specimens submitted by Viral Watch sites has increased from an average of 35 per month during March and April to 104 for the month of May, and 65 for this month as at 12 June.

Influenza A(H3N2) has been detected in 29 patients, influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 in 13, and

influenza B virus in five patients. The majority (64%, 30/47) of patients with influenza were from Western Cape Province. In addition, 23 specimens have been received from patients at a point of entry into South Africa. Influenza B was detected in eight and influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 in two of these patients respectively.

As at 12 June 2014, 699 patients hospitalised with severe acute respiratory illness were tested at the four surveillance programme sentinel sites. Of these, four patients tested positive for influenza: two with influenza A(H3N2), and one each with influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 and influenza A (unsubtyped) (Table 2). In addition, 30% (202/699), 28% (187/699) and 8% (57/699) of cases were positive for respiratory syncytial virus, rhinovirus and adenovirus, respectively.

Table 2. Cumulative number of identified influenza types and subtypes and total number of samples collected by hospital, Severe Acute Respiratory Illness surveillance programme

Hospital	A not subtyped	A(H1N1)pdm09	A(H3N2)	B	Total samples
Edendale (KZN)	0	0	0	0	242
Klerksdorp-Tshepong (NW)	1	0	1	0	316
Mapulaneng (MP)	0	0	0	0	77
Matikwane (MP)	0	1	1	0	64
Total:	1	1	2	0	699

Clinicians are reminded to consider influenza in patients admitted with severe acute respiratory illness and to initiate empiric influenza antiviral therapy where influenza is suspected in such cases. Recommendations on target groups, dosages and contraindications for the 2014 influenza vaccine and influenza antiviral treatment are available in the Healthcare Workers Handbook on Influenza 2014,

which can be accessed at: [http://nicd.ac.za/assets/files/Healthcare%20Workers%20Handbook%20on%20Influenza%20in%20SA%2012%20May%202014\(1\).pdf](http://nicd.ac.za/assets/files/Healthcare%20Workers%20Handbook%20on%20Influenza%20in%20SA%2012%20May%202014(1).pdf).

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