

3 SEASONAL DISEASES

a The influenza season, South Africa, 2016

The 2016 influenza season which started in week 19 (the week starting 09 May 2016), is ongoing (Figure 3).

At any time during the season, one of the three usual influenza strains (A(H1N1), A(H3N2) and B) may be more common. The 2016 influenza season started with influenza B accounting for the majority of detections until week 28 (week ending 17 July) when the circulation of influenza A(H3N2) and A(H1N1)pdm09 started to increase.

Influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 previously known as 'swine flu' has been circulating as expected each season since 2009. This strain behaves similarly to

other seasonal influenza strains in terms of transmission and clinical presentation following infection. Identification of patients with this strain of influenza during the influenza season is to be expected and there are no specific public health interventions required for patients or contacts infected with influenza A(H1N1)pdm09. There is also no difference in severity of illness or response to treatment. Routine laboratory testing of persons with suspected influenza-like illness is not required.

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

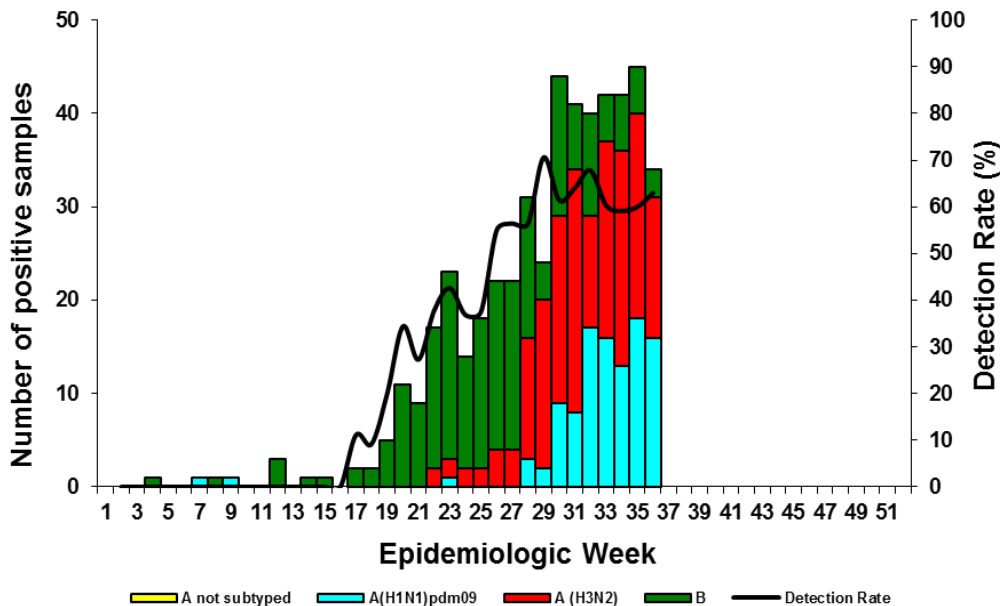


Figure 3. Number of influenza types and subtypes and detection rate by week, influenza-like illness surveillance, Viral Watch, 2016