

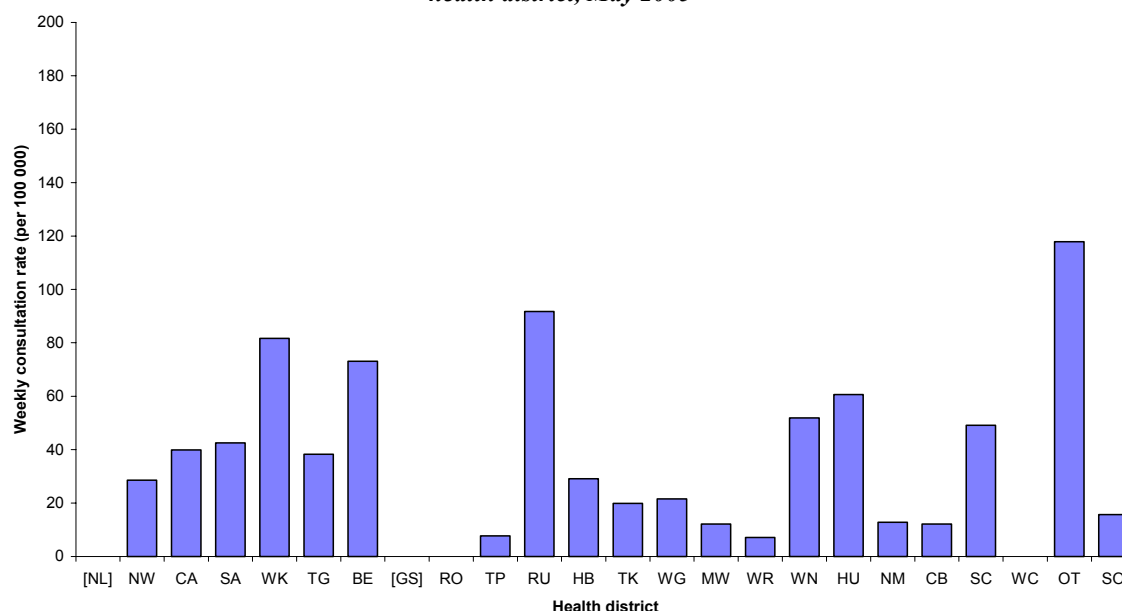
INFLUENZA SURVEILLANCE SUMMARY - MAY 2005

During May (weeks 18 – 21), 424 consultations for influenza-like illness were reported from 78 general practices (on average) in 22 out of 24 health districts. The average weekly consultation rate for May was 34.6 per 100 000 patient population.

Figure 1 compares the average weekly consultation rates for influenza-like illness for each health district during May. Otago had the highest consultation rate (117.9 per 100 000), followed by Ruapehu (91.7 per 100 000).

Figure 1

Average weekly consultation rates for influenza-like illness by health district, May 2005



NB [] Health districts not participating

A total of 135 swabs were sent for testing during May from sentinel surveillance. One hundred and fifty-one influenza swabs were received by the regional virology laboratories. Of these, 46 influenza viruses were identified, 40 were B/Hong Kong/330/2001-like and six were B/Shanghai/361/2002-like. The distribution by health district is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

	NW	CA	SA	WK	TG	BE	RO	WN	NM	Total
B/Hong Kong/330/2001-like	3	14	3	6	0	2	1	10	1	40
B/Shanghai/361/2002-like	0	0	1	2	1	1	0	1	0	6
Total	3	14	4	8	1	3	1	11	1	46

In addition, 63 influenza viruses were reported from the laboratory-based (non-sentinel) surveillance in May. Of these, 30 were B/Hong Kong/330/2001-like, 14 were influenza B (yet to be antigenically

typed), 13 were B/Shanghai/361/2002-like, five were influenza A (yet to be sub-typed), and one was A/Wellington/1/2004-like. The distribution by health district is shown in Table 2.

Table 2

	NW	CA	SA	WK	GS	HB	NM	CB	Total
A	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	5
A/Wellington/1/2004-like	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
B	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	13	14
B/Hong Kong/330/2001-like	2	14	6	6	1	1	0	0	30
B/Shanghai/361/2002-like	0	2	1	10	0	0	0	0	13
Total	2	16	8	16	1	1	1	18	63

Figure 2 shows the cumulative total of influenza isolates confirmed (sentinel and laboratory-based surveillance) for May 2005. A total of 109 viruses were identified. Of these, 70 were B/Hong Kong/330/2001-like, 19 were B/Shanghai/361/2002-like, 14 were influenza B (yet to be antigenically typed), five were influenza A (yet to be sub-typed), and one was A/Wellington/1/2004-like.

Figure 2

Cumulative laboratory-confirmed isolates by health district, May 2005

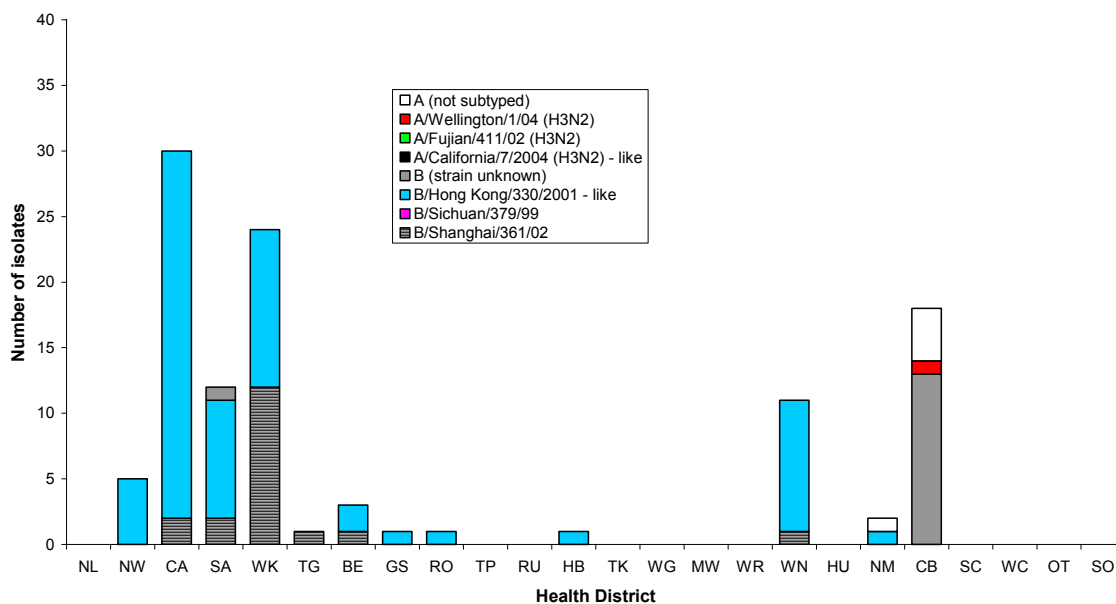
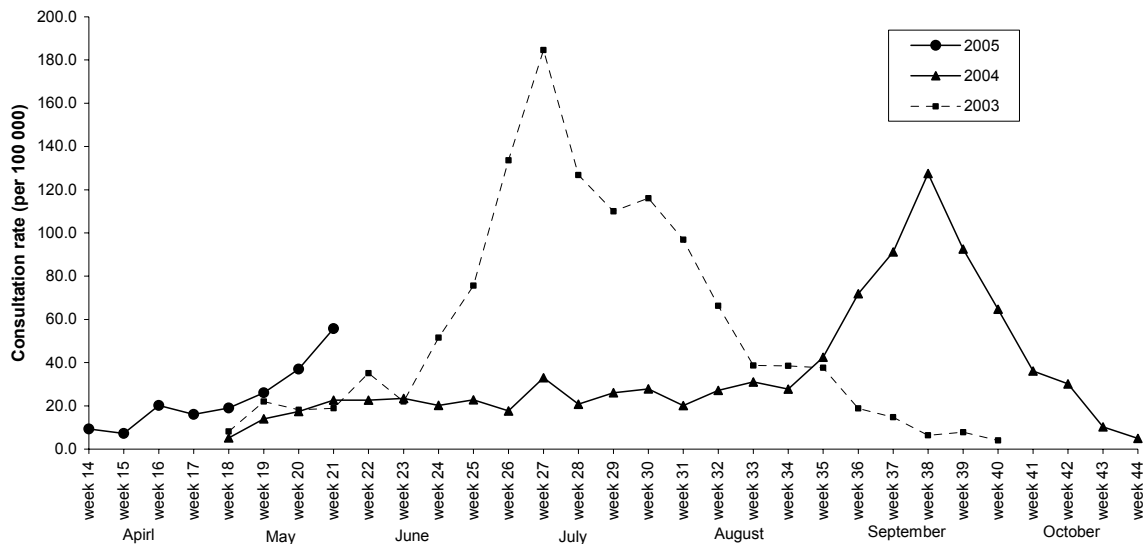


Figure 3 shows the national weekly consultation rates to the end of week 21, May 2005 and rates in 2004 and 2003.

Figure 3

Weekly consultation rates for influenza-like illness in New Zealand, 2003, 2004 and 2005



Appendix: Influenza in Wellington Schools

The illnesses reported in week no. 20 (May 16-22) to be circulating in schools in the Wellington region and beyond have caused high levels of absenteeism among schoolchildren.

Regional Public Health surveyed all school in Wellington, Porirua, Kapiti and Hutt in week no. 21 (23-29) to try and get an overview of what was going on at that point in time. There was a good response rate of 61% (134/220 schools). Key findings were:

- There was a marked increase in illness in the week starting 16 May
- 18% of schools noted that on the worst day there were more than 20% of children away from school
- The areas with the highest absenteeism were Wellington and Porirua
- 24% of schools responded that the illnesses were “mainly respiratory”, 9% reported “mainly gastroenteritis”, 55% reported both and 12% were not sure.

Case histories from affected children, and descriptions of the illness patterns from schools suggest that the predominant illness circulating is influenza. A number of sentinel practices and several other practices have assisted by taking viral nasopharyngeal swabs. The small number of results to date (and communication with Auckland where swabs have also been taken) have identified two strains of influenza B - the Hong Kong strain and the Shanghai strain. Shanghai B is in the influenza vaccination this year, however Hong Kong B is not.

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