In the past week, a total of 98 consultations for influenza-like illness were reported from 83 general practices in 22 out of 24 health districts. This gives a weekly consultation rate of 27.8 per 100,000 patient population.

Figure 1 compares the consultation rates for influenza-like illness for each health district over the past week. South Canterbury had the highest consultation rate (103.0 per 100,000), followed by Otago (97.2 per 100,000).

Eighteen swabs were sent from the sentinel surveillance in the past week. Nineteen swabs were received by virology laboratories. One influenza A virus (yet to be subtyped) was reported from Canterbury.

Six isolates were reported from Canterbury from the laboratory-based (non-sentinel) surveillance. Of these, four were influenza A virus (yet to be subtyped), and two were influenza B (yet to be further typed). Three of the influenza A isolates have come from an outbreak in a geriatric mental health assessment unit.
Figure 2 shows the cumulative total of influenza isolates confirmed (sentinel and laboratory-based surveillance) to the end of week 30, July 2004. A total of 18 isolates were identified. Of these, 10 were influenza A (yet to be subtyped), five were subtyped as A/Fujian/411/2002 (H3N2), and three as influenza B.

Figure 2

Cumulative laboratory-confirmed isolates by health district to 23 July 2004

[ ] The two A/Fujian/411/2002 (H3N2) viruses reported from South Auckland were specimens taken in March.

Figure 3 shows the weekly national consultation rates for 2002 and 2003 seasons, and 2004 so far. The current rate of influenza is lower than at the same time last year.

Figure 3

Figure 4 illustrates consultation rates for influenza-like illness mapped by health district for week 30, 2004.

Figure 4

The threshold used to describe the influenza-like activity can be referred in New Zealand Public Health Report 2001, 8 (1): 9-12 "Influenza surveillance and immunisation in New Zealand, 1990-1999".

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