In the past week, a total of 148 consultations for influenza-like illness were reported from 82 general practices in 21 out of 24 health districts. This gives a weekly consultation rate of 42.5 per 100,000 patient population.

Figure 1 compares the consultation rates for influenza-like illness for each health district over the past week. Eastern Bay of Plenty had the highest consultation rate (243.8 per 100,000), followed by South Auckland (220.7 per 100,000).

Forty-six swabs were sent from the sentinel surveillance in the past week. Thirty-five swabs were received by virology laboratories. Of these, three influenza viruses were identified, two as influenza A/Fujian/411/2002 (H3N2) viruses from Central Auckland and North West Auckland, and one as influenza A (yet to be subtyped) from Canterbury.

In addition, 21 influenza isolates were reported this week for the laboratory-based (non-sentinel) surveillance. Of these, 20 were identified as influenza A (yet to be subtyped), and one as influenza B. The distribution by health district is shown in Table 2.
Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CA</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>WK</th>
<th>WN</th>
<th>CB</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2 shows the cumulative total of influenza isolates confirmed (sentinel and laboratory-based surveillance) to the end of week 35, August 2004. A total of 72 isolates were identified. Of these, 53 were influenza A (yet to be subtyped), 13 were subtyped as A/Fujian/411/2002 (H3N2), two as B/Shanghai/361/02-like, and four as influenza B (not typed).

Figure 2

Cumulative laboratory-confirmed isolates by health district to 27 August 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 higher than at the same time last year.
Figure 3

Figure 4 illustrates consultation rates for influenza-like illness mapped by health district for week 35, 2004.

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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