In the past week, a total of 439 consultations for influenza-like illness were reported from 80 general practices in 21 out of 24 health districts. This gives a weekly consultation rate of 127.5 per 100 000 patient population.

Figure 1 compares the consultation rates for influenza-like illness for each health district over the past week. Hutt had the highest consultation rate (428.6 per 100 000), followed by Otago (415.7 per 100 000).

Figure 1

Seventy-four swabs were sent from the sentinel surveillance in the past week. Seventy-three swabs were received by virology laboratories. Of these, 37 influenza viruses were identified, 21 as influenza A/Fujian/411/02 (H3N2) viruses, 15 as influenza A (yet to be subtyped), and one as B/Sichuan/379/99-like. The distribution by health district is shown in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health district</th>
<th>NW</th>
<th>CA</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>HB</th>
<th>GS</th>
<th>WN</th>
<th>CB</th>
<th>OT</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A (not subtyped)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A/Fujian/411/02</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B/Sichuan/379/99</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition, 112 influenza isolates were reported this week for the laboratory-based (non-sentinel) surveillance. Of these, 95 were identified as influenza A (yet to be subtyped), 12 influenza A/Fujian/411/02 (H3N2) viruses, and five as influenza B. The distribution by health district is shown in Table 2.

Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NL</th>
<th>CA</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>WK</th>
<th>WN</th>
<th>CB</th>
<th>OT</th>
<th>SC</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A (not subtyped)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A/Fujian/411/02</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B (not typed)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2 shows the cumulative total of influenza isolates confirmed (sentinel and laboratory-based surveillance) to the end of week 38, September 2004. A total of 457 isolates were identified. Of these, 258 were influenza A (yet to be subtyped), 182 were subtyped as A/Fujian/411/02 (H3N2), 12 as influenza B (not typed), three as B/Shanghai/361/02-like, and two as B/Sichuan/379/99.

Figure 2

Cumulative laboratory-confirmed isolates by health district to 17 September 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


- 2004
- 2003
- 2002
Figure 4 illustrates consultation rates for influenza-like illness mapped by health district for week 38, 2004.

Consultations for Influenza-like Illness (per 100 000 practice patients)
- No Data
- No Activity (0)
- Baseline (<50)
- Normal (50 - 249)
- High Activity (250 - 399)
- Epidemic (>=400)

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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