In the past week, a total of 103 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 30.2 per 100,000 patient population.

Figure 1 compares the consultation rates for influenza-like illness for each health district over the past week. Otago had the highest consultation rate (100.6 per 100,000), followed by South Canterbury (78.2 per 100,000).

Figure 1

Twenty-three swabs were sent from the sentinel surveillance in the past week. Nineteen swabs were received by virology laboratories. Of these, 16 influenza viruses were identified, eight as influenza A/Fujian/411/02 (H3N2) viruses, five as influenza A (yet to be subtyped), two as B/Sichuan/379/99, and one as influenza B (not typed). The distribution by health district is shown in Table 1.
In addition, 21 influenza isolates were reported this week for the laboratory-based (non-sentinel) surveillance. Of these, 15 were identified as influenza A (yet to be subtyped), four as influenza B (not typed), and two influenza A/Fujian/411/02 (H3N2) viruses. The distribution by health district is shown in Table 2.

Figure 2 shows the cumulative total of influenza isolates confirmed (sentinel and laboratory-based surveillance) to the end of week 42, 15 October 2004. A total of 799 isolates were identified. Of these, 447 subtyped as A/Fujian/411/02 (H3N2), 308 as influenza A (yet to be subtyped), 25 as influenza B (not typed), 10 as B/Shanghai/361/02, and nine as B/Sichuan/379/99.

Figure 2

*Cumulative laboratory-confirmed isolates by health district to 15 October 2004*

[ ] 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.

Figure 3

*Weekly consultation rates for influenza-like illness in New Zealand, 2002, 2003 and 2004*
Figure 4 illustrates consultation rates for influenza-like illness mapped by health district for week 42, 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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