

INFLUENZA WEEKLY UPDATE

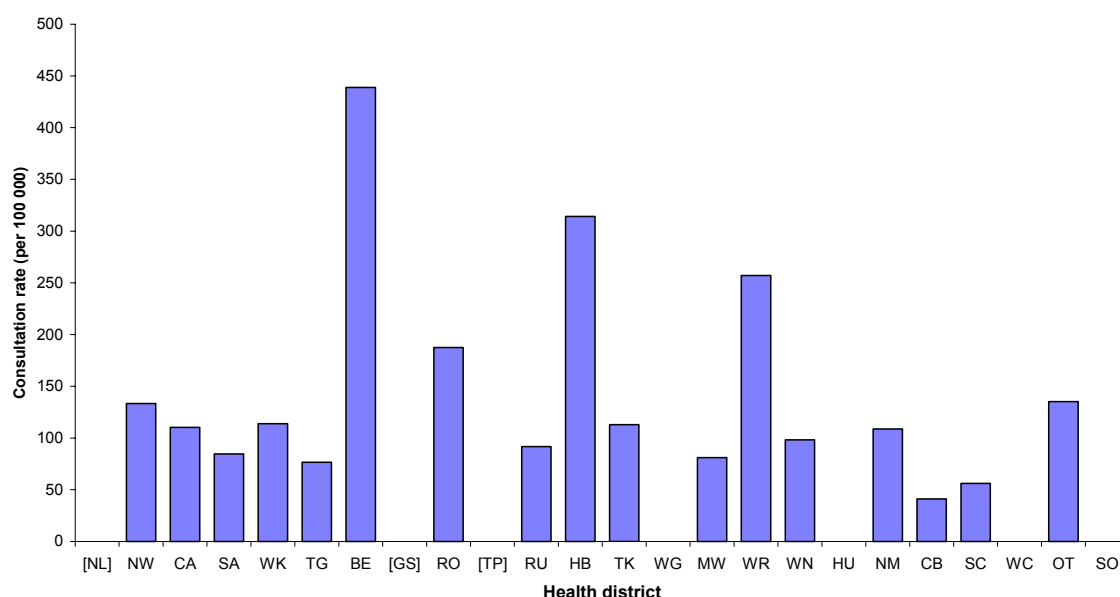
2005/24: 11 June – 17 June 2005

In the past week, a total of 336 consultations for influenza-like illness were reported from 81 general practices in 21 out of 24 health districts. This gives a weekly consultation rate of 109.1 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 (438.8 per 100 000), followed by Hawke's Bay (314.2 per 100 000).

Figure 1

*Weekly consultation rates for influenza-like illness by health district
week ending 17 June 2005*



[] Health Districts not participating

Seventy-eight swabs were sent from the sentinel surveillance in the past week. Eighty-two swabs were received by virology laboratories. Of these, 25 influenza viruses were identified, 21 as B/Hong Kong/330/2001-like, three as influenza B (yet to be antigenically typed), and one as B/Shanghai/361/2002-like. The distribution by health district is shown in Table 1.

Table 1.

	NW	CA	SA	WK	TG	BE	WN	CB	SO	Total
B	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	3
B/Hong Kong/330/2001-like	3	6	3	0	1	2	4	1	1	21
B/Shanghai/361/2002-like	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	3	6	4	1	1	2	4	3	1	25

In addition, 41 influenza viruses were reported this week from the laboratory-based (non-sentinel) surveillance. Twenty-five were identified as influenza B (yet to be antigenically typed), 13 as B/Hong Kong/330/2001-like, two as B/Shanghai/361/2002-like, and one as B/Sichuan/379/99-like. The distribution by health district is shown in Table 2.

Table 2.

	NL	NW	CA	SA	WK	HB	WN	CB	SC	Total
B	0	0	1	0	15	1	1	7	0	25
B/Hong Kong/330/2001-like	2	1	3	2	1	3	0	0	1	13
B/Sichuan/379/99-like	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
B/Shanghai/361/2002-like	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Total	3	1	4	2	18	4	1	7	1	41

Figure 2 shows the cumulative total of influenza isolates confirmed (sentinel and laboratory-based surveillance) to the end of week 24, 17 June 2005. A total of 241 influenza viruses were identified, 131 as B/Hong Kong/330/2001-like, 58 as influenza B (yet to be antigenically typed), 29 as B/Shanghai/361/2002-like, five as B/Sichuan/379/99-like (belonging to B/Shanghai lineage), nine as influenza A (yet to be sub-typed), four as A/Wellington/1/2004-like, three as A/Fujian/411/2002-like, and two as A/California/7/2004-like.

Figure 2

Cumulative laboratory-confirmed isolates by health district to 17 June 2005

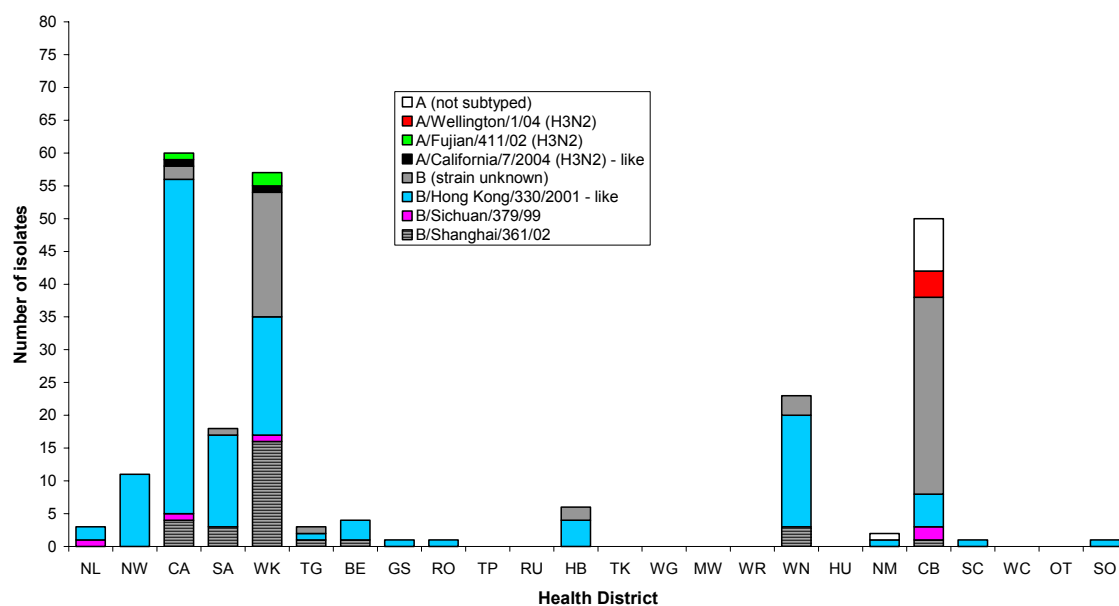
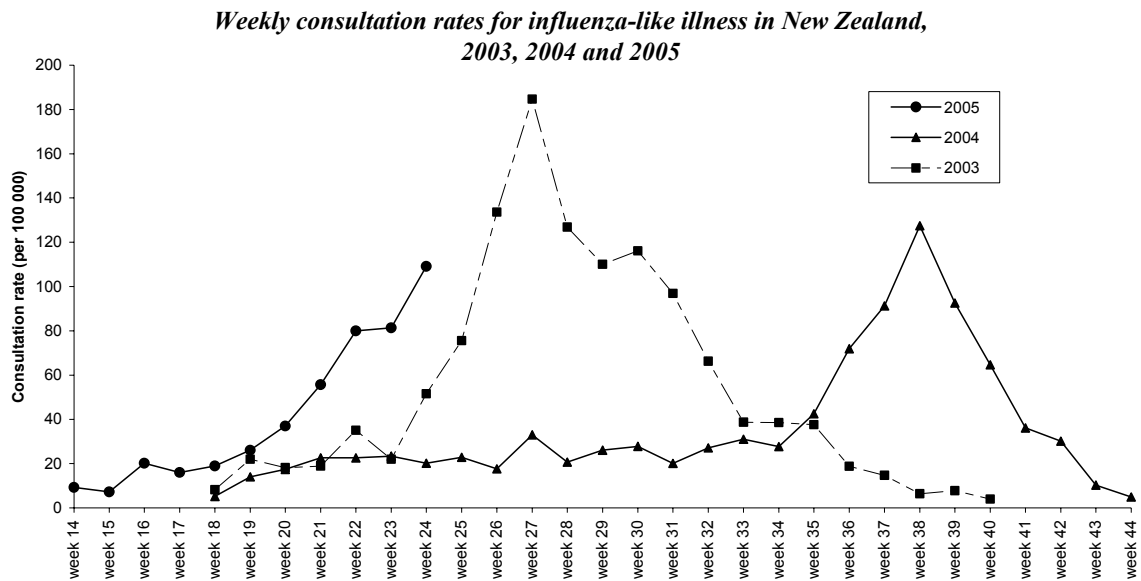


Figure 3 shows the weekly national consultation rates for 2003 and 2004 seasons, and 2005 so far. The current rate of influenza is higher than at the same time last year.

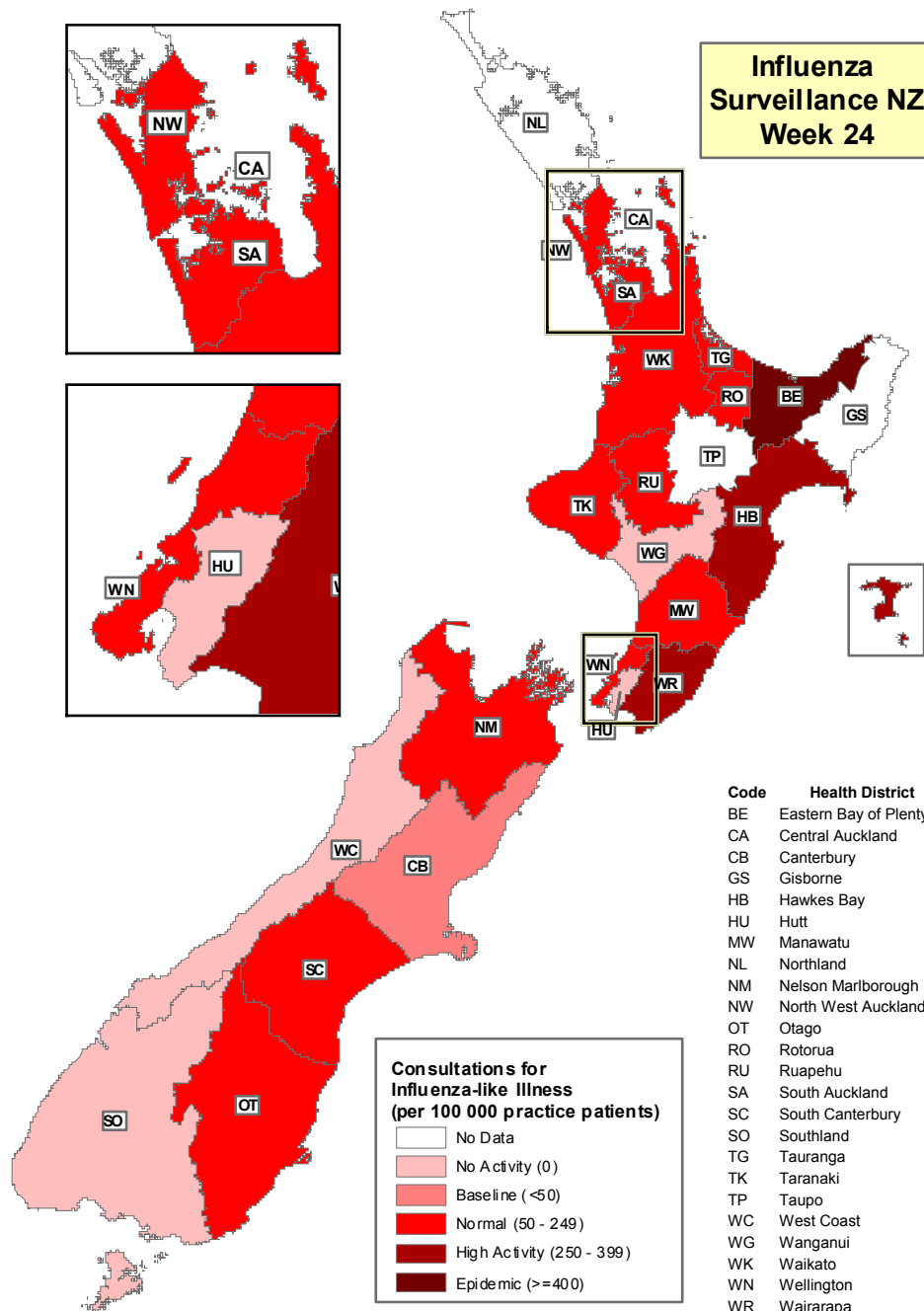
Figure 3



New Zealand is currently experiencing an Influenza B epidemic in children and young adults. Influenza B has been the cause of the second and third largest influenza outbreaks since influenza surveillance began in 1992. These outbreaks occurred in 1995 and 1997. This year to date, isolation of Influenza B viruses in the under 19 age group are three times higher than those observed in 1995 and 1997. In addition, consultation rates for influenza like illness (ILI) are the highest in the under 19 age group and comprise 50% of all consultations for ILI. Furthermore, the epidemic has been associated with significant morbidity, as illustrated by reports in the media of significant school absenteeism.

Figure 4 illustrates consultation rates for influenza-like illness mapped by health district for week 24, 2005.

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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