

# INFLUENZA WEEKLY UPDATE

2005/31: 30 July – 5 August 2005

---

## Summary

Influenza in the population is estimated using the number of GP consultations for flu like illnesses. For 2005 this started on April 4 and reached a peak during the week beginning Monday June 18. Since then levels have steadily decreased. Current levels are at baseline.

The health districts with the highest rate last week were Otago and Eastern Bay of Plenty. More than half of the cases this week were in adults aged more than 20 years. A quarter were in children aged 5-19 years.

So far this year almost 94% of the laboratory tested cases were influenza B with a small number of influenza A cases.

## Thresholds used to describe influenza-like activity\*

Term used		Consultation rate (per 100 000 population)
Baseline		<= 49
Normal seasonal activity	low	50-99
	moderate	100-149
	high	150-249
higher than expected		250-399
severe epidemic		>= 400

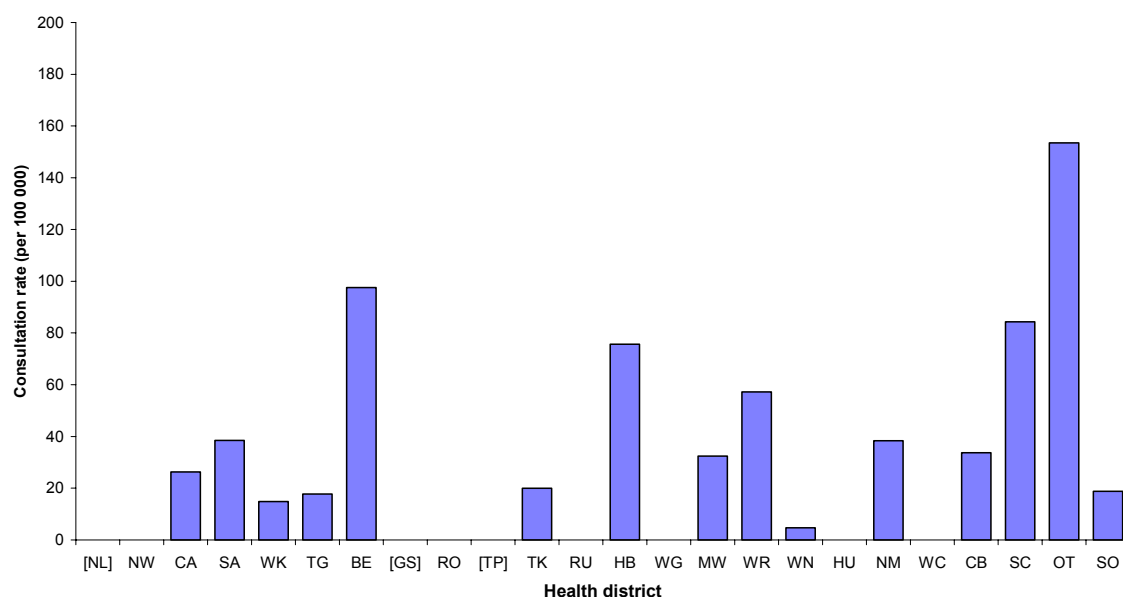
\*Note: This was published in *New Zealand Public Health Report 2001*, 8(1):9-12 "Influenza surveillance and immunisation in New Zealand, 1990-1999"

In the past week, a total of 108 consultations for influenza-like illness were reported from 79 general practices in 21 out of 24 health districts. This gives a weekly consultation rate of 35.3 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 (153.5 per 100 000), followed by Eastern Bay of Plenty (97.5 per 100 000).

**Figure 1**

*Weekly consultation rates for influenza-like illness by health district  
week ending 5 August 2005*



[ ] Health districts not participating

Twenty-seven swabs were sent from the sentinel surveillance in the past week. Thirty-three swabs were received by virology laboratories. Of these, 10 influenza viruses were identified, seven as B/Hong Kong/330/2001-like, two as A/California/7/2004-like, and one as influenza B (yet to be antigenically typed). The distribution by health district is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.**

	SA	HB	WN	NM	OT	Total
A/California/7/2004 (H3N2) - like	0	1	1	0	0	2
B	0	0	0	0	1	1
B/Hong Kong/330/2001 - like	1	0	1	2	3	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>

In addition, three influenza viruses were reported this week from the laboratory-based (non-sentinel) surveillance two as B/Hong Kong/330/2001-like, and one as influenza B (yet to be antigenically typed) from Waikato.

Figure 2 shows the cumulative total of influenza isolates confirmed (sentinel and laboratory-based surveillance) to the end of week 31, 5 August 2005. A total of 754 influenza viruses were identified, 508 as B/Hong Kong/330/2001-like, 89 as influenza B (yet to be antigenically typed), 91 as B/Shanghai/361/2002-like, 20 as B/Sichuan/379/1999-like (belonging to B/Shanghai lineage), 22 as A/California/7/2004-like, 17 as influenza A (yet to be sub-typed), four as A/Wellington/1/2004-like, and three as A/Fujian/411/2002-like.

**Figure 2**

*Cumulative laboratory-confirmed isolates by health district to 5 August 2005*

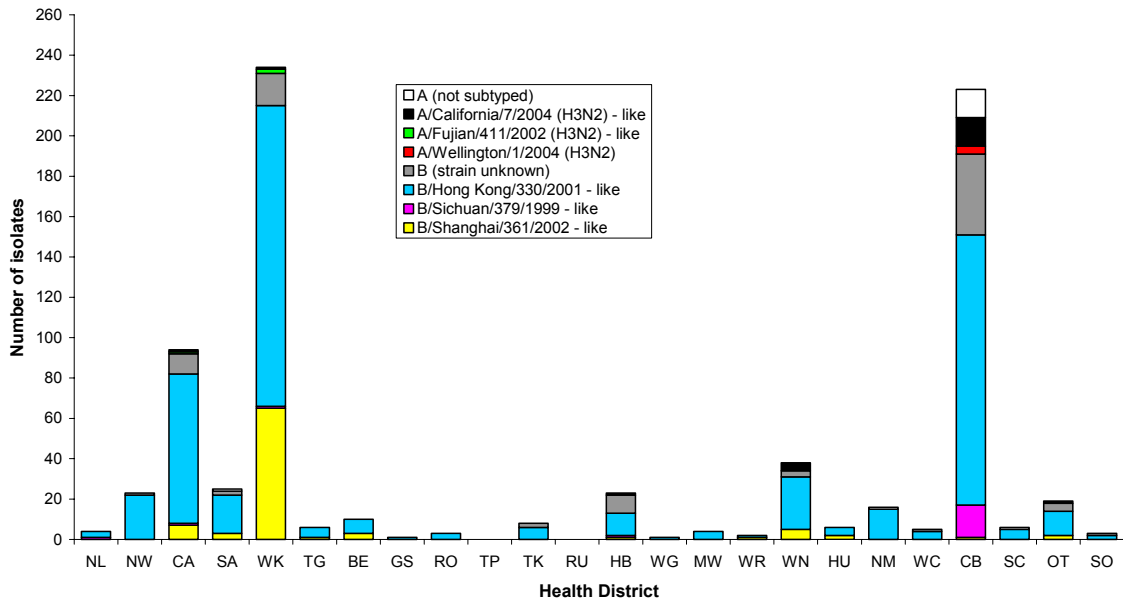


Figure 3 shows the weekly national consultation rates for 2003 and 2004 seasons, and 2005 so far. The current rate of influenza is higher than at the same time last year.

**Figure 3**

*Weekly consultation rates for influenza-like illness in New Zealand, 2003, 2004 and 2005*

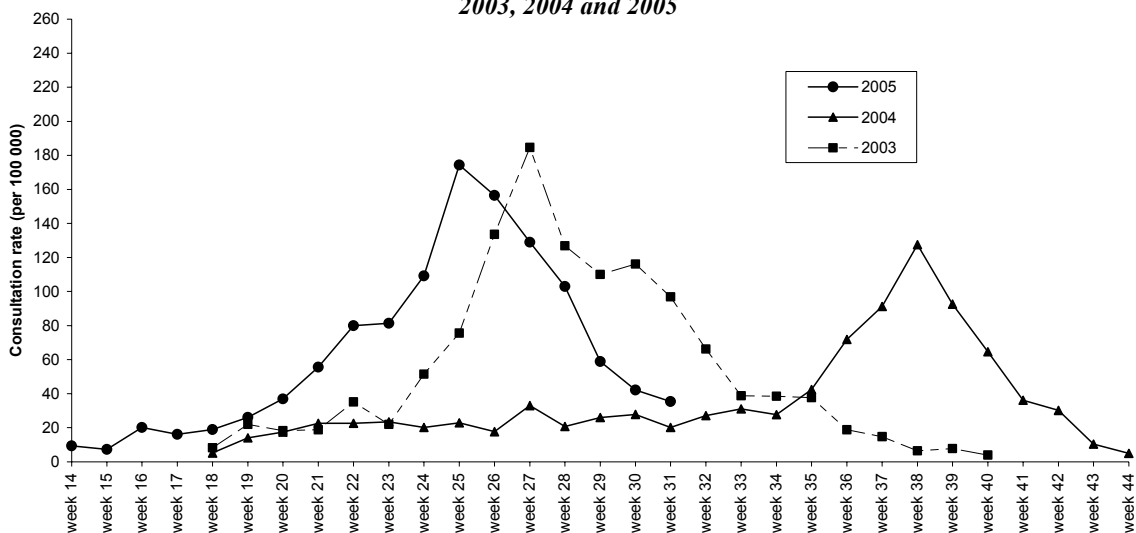
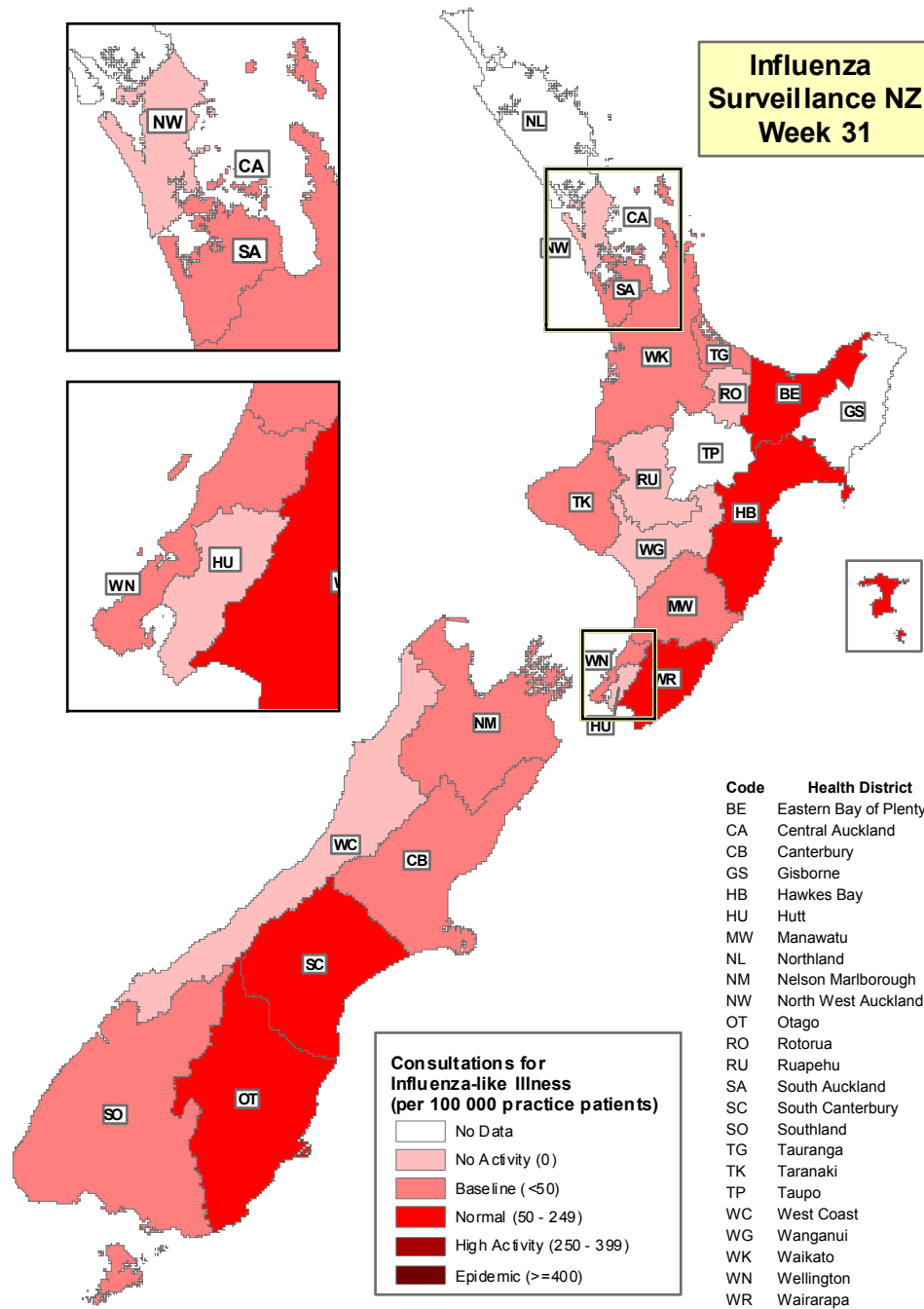


Figure 4 illustrates consultation rates for influenza-like illness mapped by health district for week 31, 2005.

**Figure 4**



Compiled by: Liza Lopez  
 Population and Environmental Health  
 ESR Kenepuru Science Centre  
 PO Box 50 348  
 PORIRUA

phone: 04 914-0647  
 fax: 04 914-0770  
 email: liza.lopez@esr.cri.nz