

INFLUENZA WEEKLY UPDATE

2005/34: 20 August– 26 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. Over 60% of the cases this week were in adults aged more than 20 years and 20% were in children aged 5-19 years.

So far this year almost 91% 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

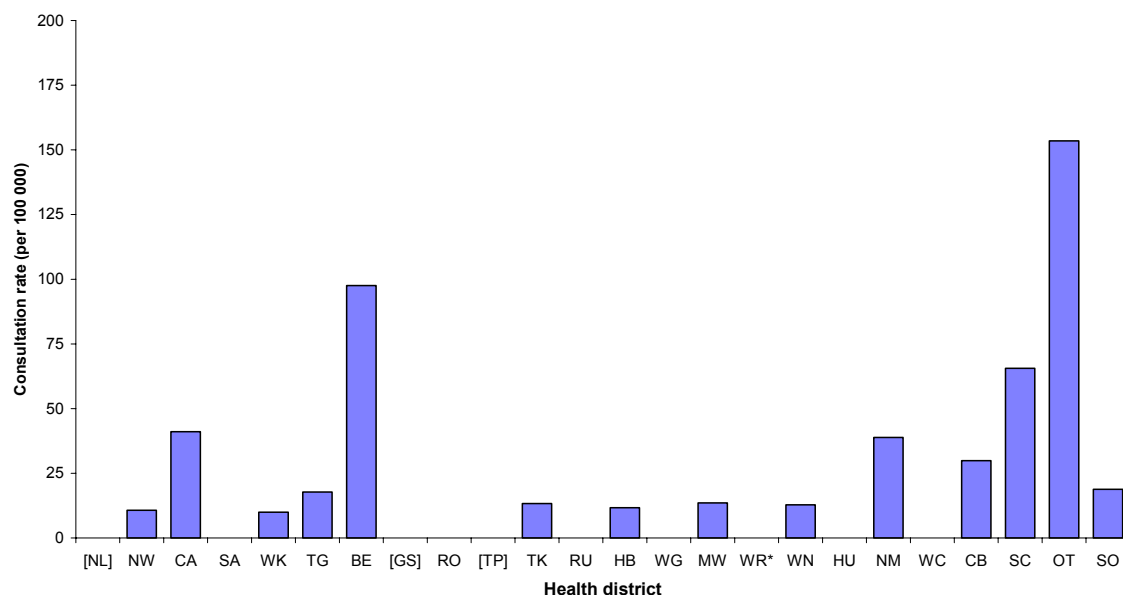
*Note: This was published in *New Zealand Public Health Report 2001, 8(1):9-12* "Influenza surveillance and immunisation in New Zealand, 1990-1999"

In the past week, a total of 85 consultations for influenza-like illness were reported from 78 general practices in 20 out of 24 health districts. This gives a weekly consultation rate of 29.3 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 26 August 2005*



[] Health districts not participating

* Health district did not participate for the week

Seventeen swabs were sent from the sentinel surveillance in the past week. Twenty swabs were received by virology laboratories. Of these, two influenza viruses were identified, one as A/California/7/2004-like from Wellington, and one as B/Hong Kong/330/2001-like from Central Auckland.

In addition, 14 influenza viruses were reported this week from the laboratory-based (non-sentinel) surveillance seven as influenza A (yet to be sub-typed) and seven as influenza B (yet to be antigenically typed). The distribution is by health district is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

	CA	WK	CB	Total
A	1	4	2	7
B	0	1	6	7
Total	1	5	8	14

Figure 2 shows the cumulative total of influenza isolates confirmed (sentinel and laboratory-based surveillance) to the end of week 34, 26 August 2005. A total of 805 influenza viruses were identified, 525 as B/Hong Kong/330/2001-like, 90 as influenza B (yet to be antigenically typed), 91 as B/Shanghai/361/2002-like, 24 as B/Sichuan/379/1999-like (belonging to B/Shanghai lineage), 39 as A/California/7/2004-like, 26 as influenza A (yet to be sub-typed), six as A/Wellington/1/2004-like, three as A/Fujian/411/2002-like, and one as A/New Caledonia/20/1999-like.

Figure 2

Cumulative laboratory-confirmed isolates by health district to 26 August 2005

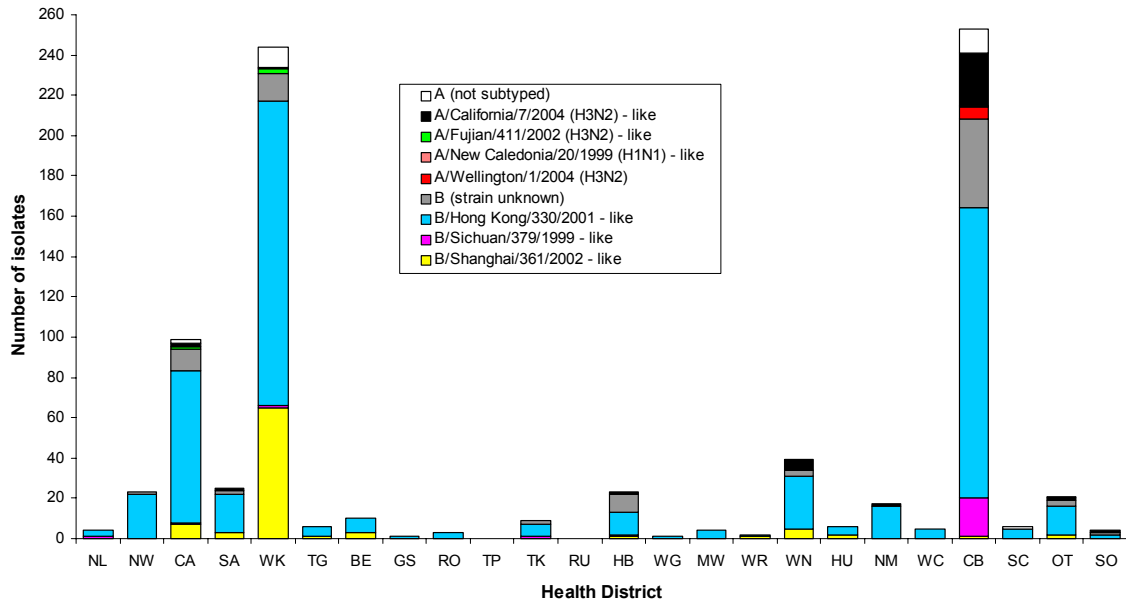


Figure 3 shows the weekly national consultation rates for 2003 and 2004 seasons, and 2005 so far. The current rate of influenza is higher than at the same time last year.

Figure 3

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

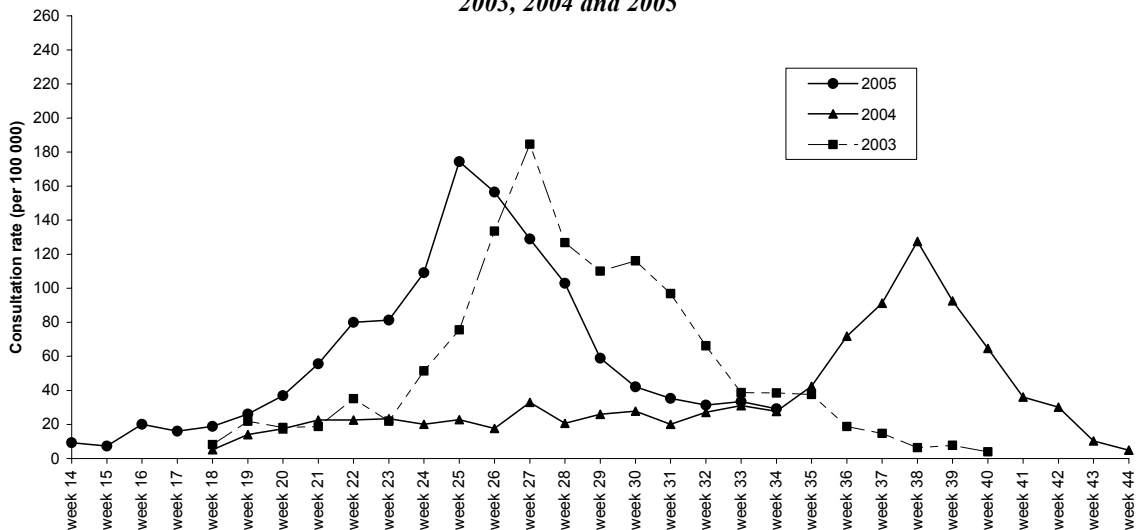
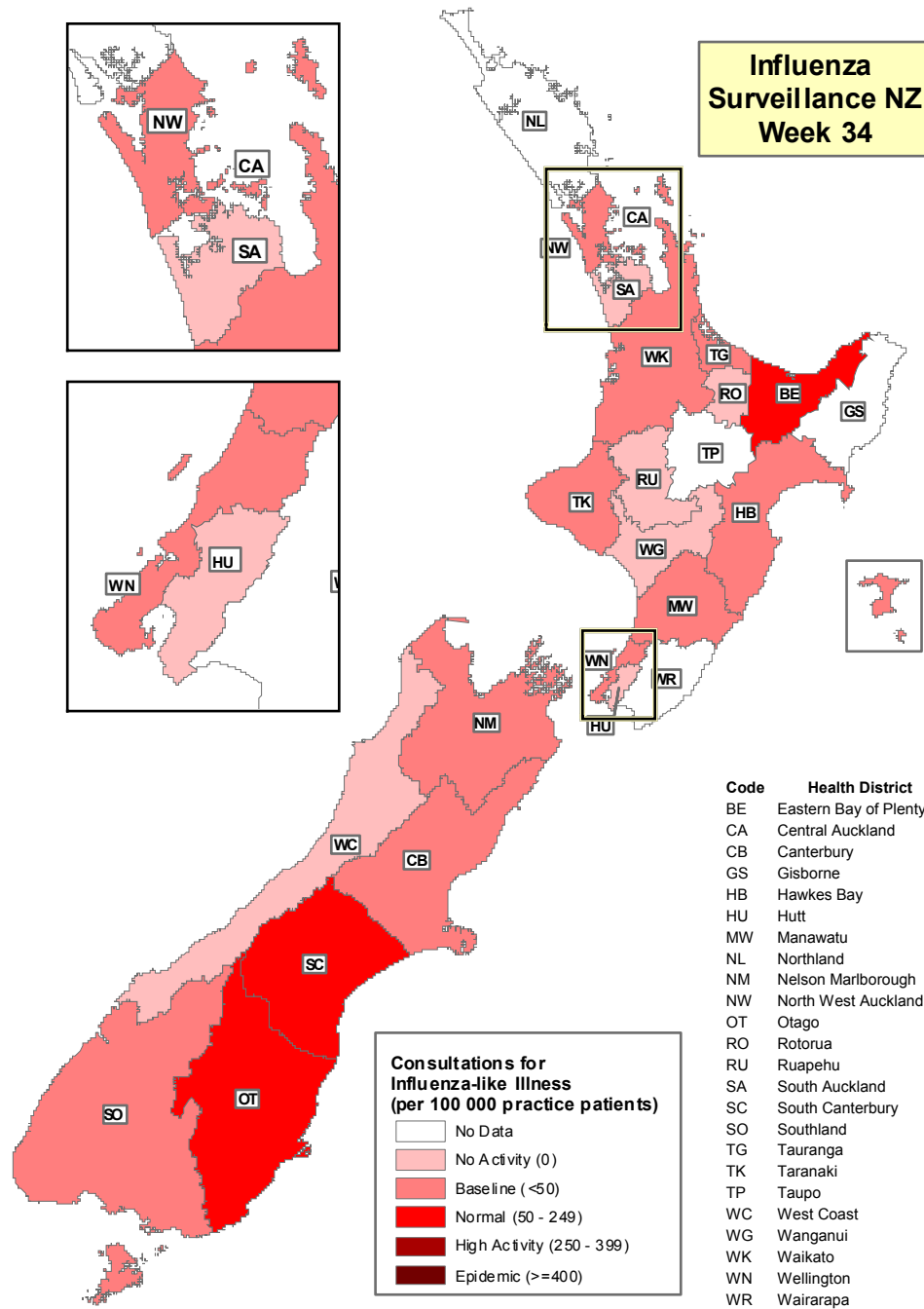


Figure 4 illustrates consultation rates for influenza-like illness mapped by health district for week 34, 2005.

Figure 4



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