

INFLUENZA WEEKLY UPDATE

2006/24: 12 - 18 June 2006

Summary

Influenza in the population is estimated using the number of GP consultations for flu like illnesses. For 2006 this started on May 1. Current levels are at baseline.

The health districts with the highest rate last week were Waikato and Taupo. Over 55% of the cases this week were in adults aged between 20 and 49 years and 22% were in children aged 5-19 years.

So far this year over 93% of the laboratory tested cases were influenza A with a small number of influenza B 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

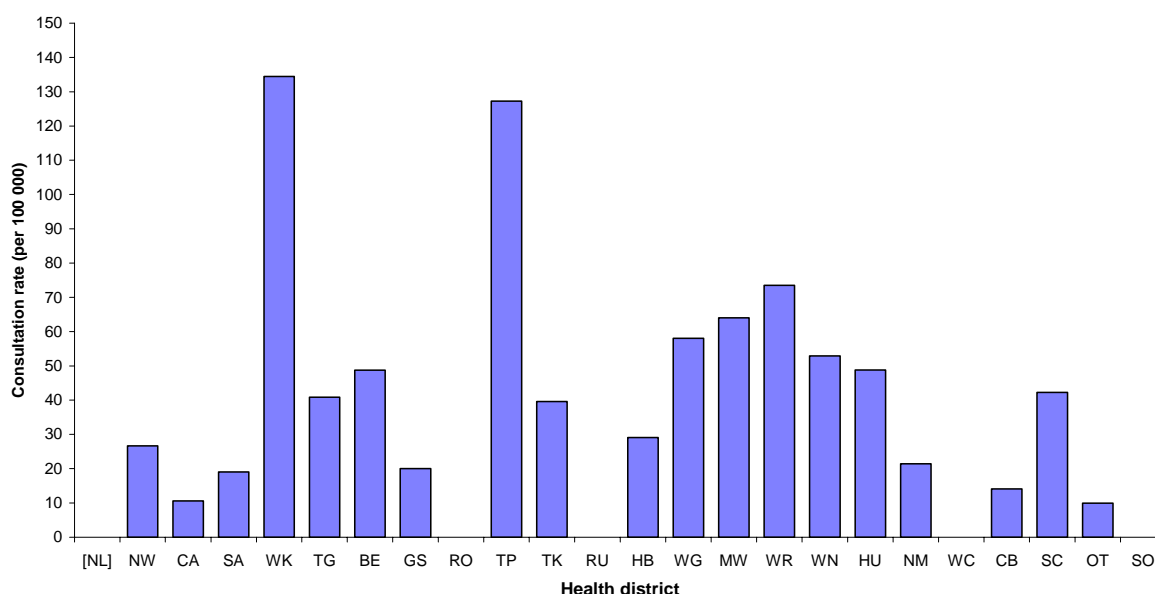
*Note: This was published in *New Zealand Public Health Report 2001, 8(1):9-12* "Influenza surveillance and immunisation in New Zealand, 1990-1999"

In the past week, a total of 121 consultations for influenza-like illness were reported from 83 general practices in 23 out of 24 health districts. This gives a weekly consultation rate of 31.5 per 100 000 patient population.

Figure 1 compares the consultation rates for influenza-like illness for each health district over the past week. Waikato had the highest consultation rate (134.4 per 100 000), followed by Taupo (127.3 per 100 000).

Figure 1

*Weekly consultation rates for influenza-like illness by health district
week ending 18 June 2006*



[] Health district not participating

Thirty-nine swabs were sent from the sentinel surveillance in the past week. Forty-four swabs were received by virology laboratories. Of these, three influenza viruses were isolated, two as influenza A (yet to be sub-typed) from Canterbury, and one as A/New York/55/2004 (H3N2) - like¹ from Tauranga.

In addition, six influenza A viruses (yet to be sub-typed) were reported from the laboratory-based (non-sentinel) surveillance from Waikato (4), Gisborne (1), and Canterbury (1).

Figure 2 shows the cumulative total of influenza isolates confirmed (sentinel and laboratory-based surveillance) to the end of week 24, 18 June 2006. A total of 45 influenza viruses were identified, 27 as influenza A (yet to be sub-typed), 13 as A/New York/55/2004 (H3N2) - like, two as A/California/7/2004-like, two as B/Shanghai/361/2002-like, and one as influenza B (yet to be antigenically typed).

¹ The H3 component of the influenza vaccine formulation for 2006 was A/California/7/2004 (H3N2)-like strain. Under the “like” strain concession in the vaccine recommendation, an antigenically similar strain can be substituted which has the qualities that may lack in the prototype strain. During the actual influenza vaccine production for 2006, A/New York/55/2004 (H3N2) strain was used to represent A/California/7/2004-like strain. Therefore, the 2006 influenza vaccine can protect people well against A/New York/55/2004 (H3N2) – like strain in the community.

Figure 2

Cumulative laboratory-confirmed isolates by health district to 18 June 2006

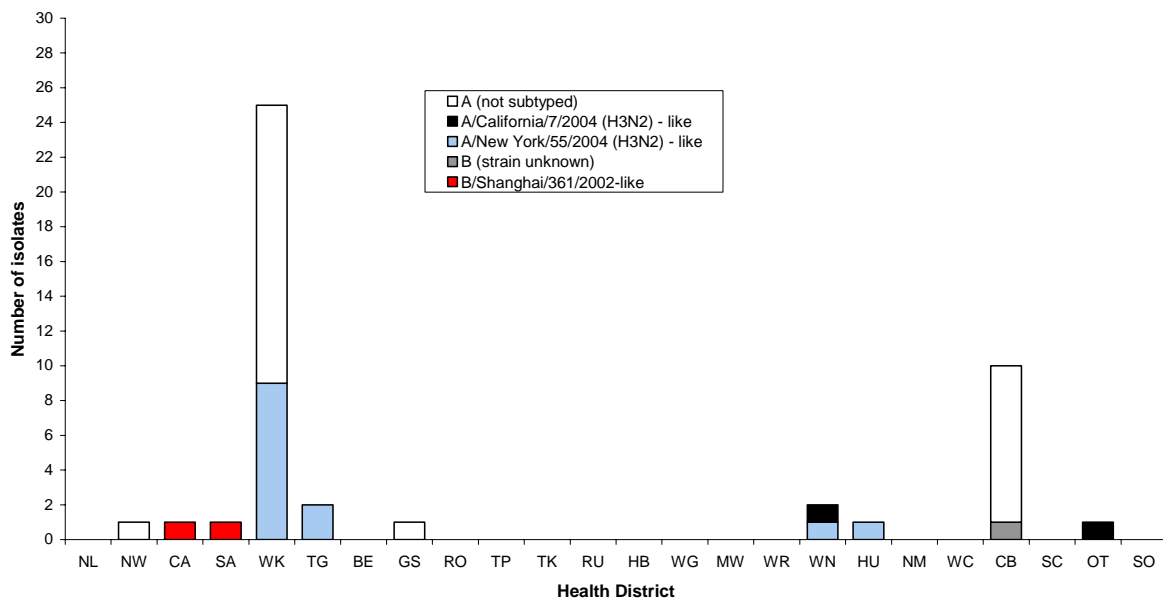


Figure 3 shows the weekly national consultation rates for 2004 and 2005 seasons, and 2006 so far.

Figure 3

Weekly consultation rates for influenza-like illness in New Zealand, 2004, 2005 and 2006

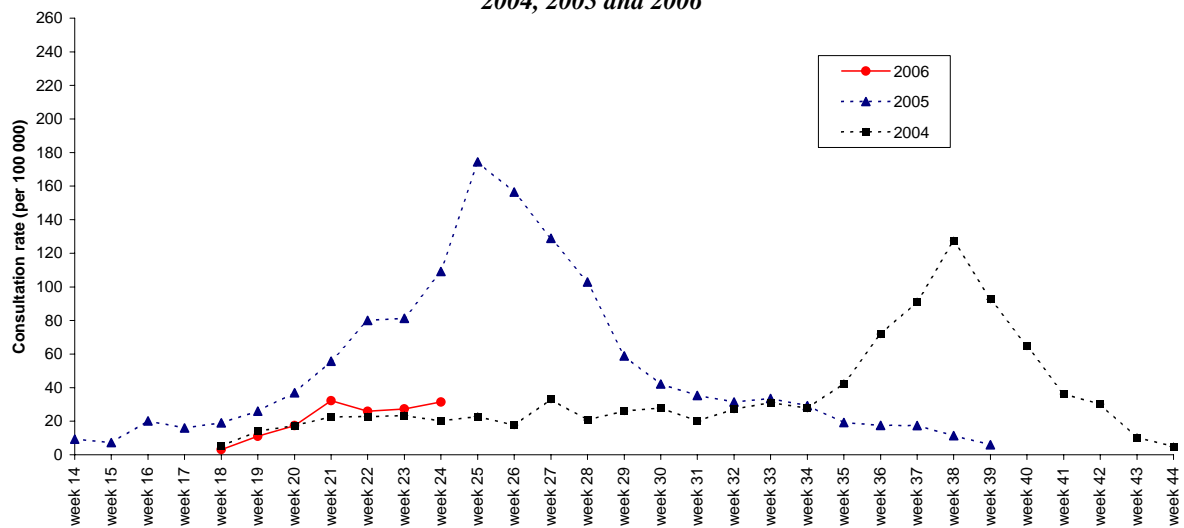
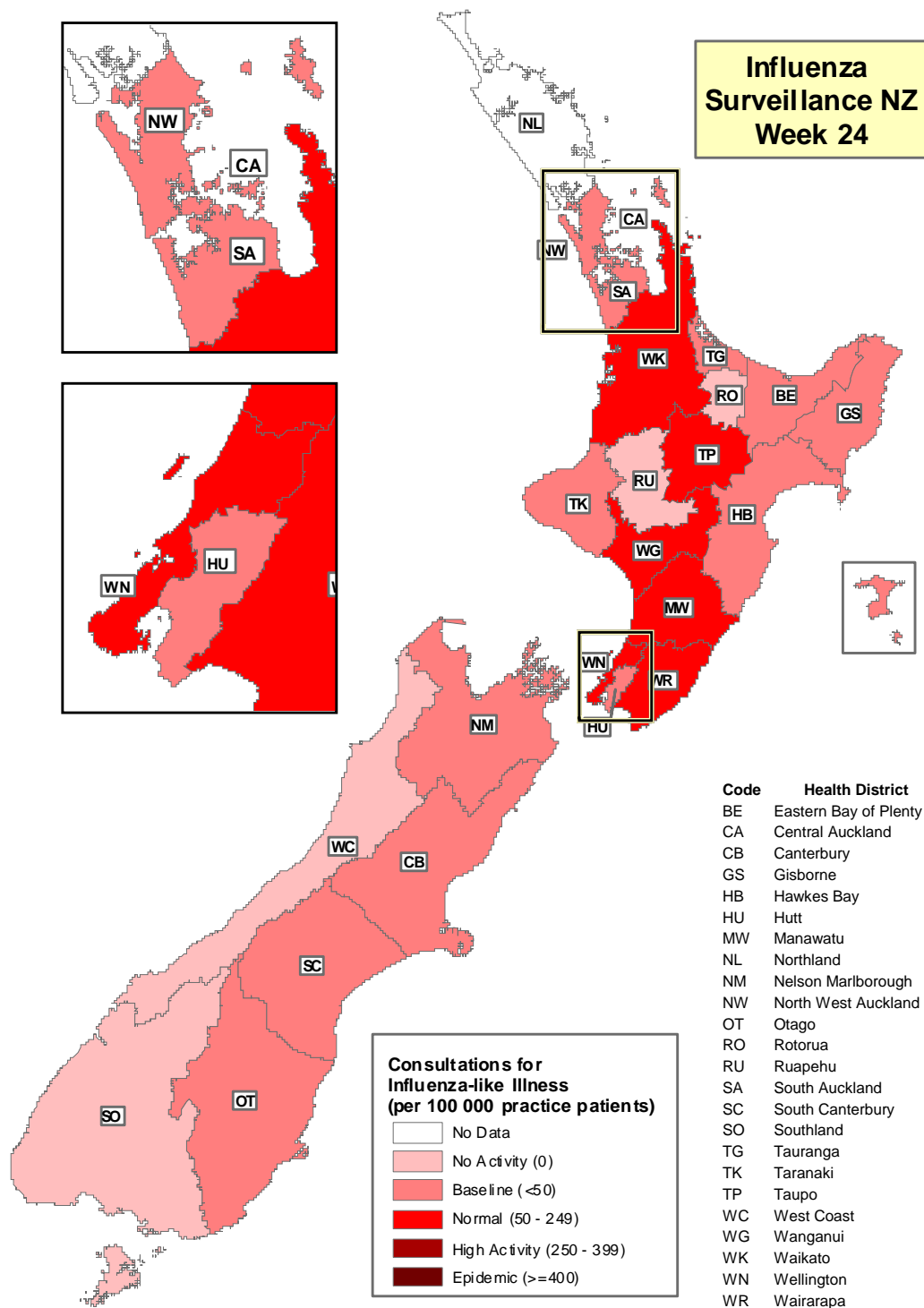


Figure 4 illustrates consultation rates for influenza-like illness mapped by health district for week 24, 2006.

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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