

INFLUENZA WEEKLY UPDATE

2006/37: 11 - 15 September 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 low and the influenza activity this week has decreased compared with the previous week.

The health districts with the highest rate last week were South Canterbury and Wairarapa. 60% of the cases this week were in adults aged between 20 and 64 years and 17% were in children aged 5-19 years.

So far this year 99% 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

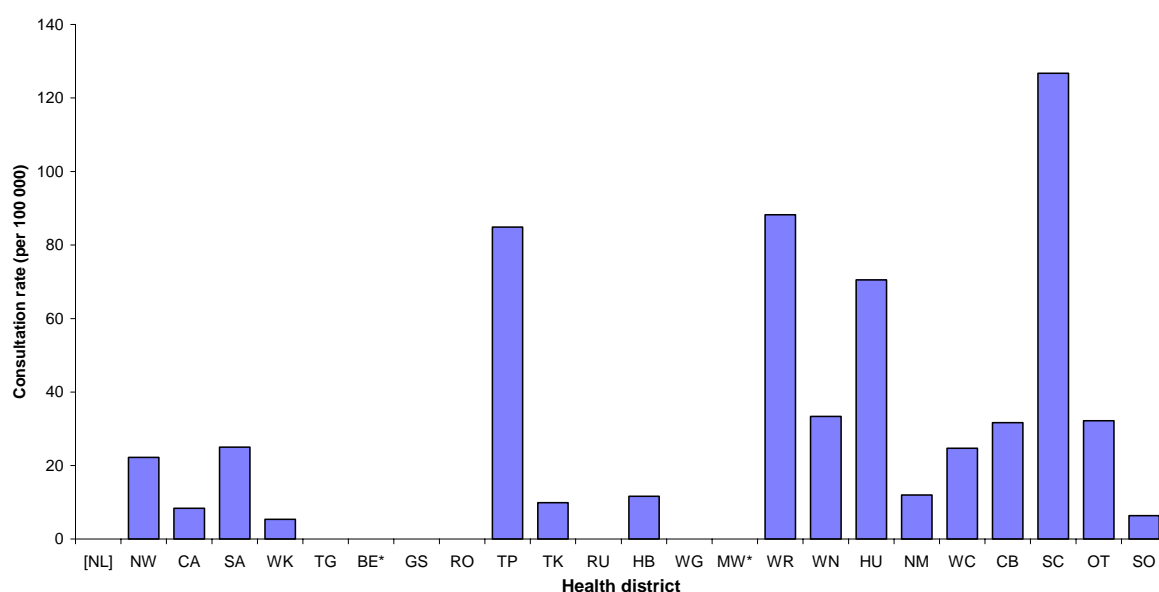
*Note: This was published in *New Zealand Public Health Report 2001, 8(1):9-12* "Influenza surveillance and immunisation in New Zealand, 1990-1999"

In the past week, a total of 82 consultations for influenza-like illness were reported from 78 general practices in 21 out of 24 health districts. This gives a weekly consultation rate of 25.5 per 100 000 patient population.

Figure 1 compares the consultation rates for influenza-like illness for each health district over the past week. South Canterbury had the highest consultation rate (126.8 per 100 000), followed by Wairarapa (88.2 per 100 000).

Figure 1

*Weekly consultation rates for influenza-like illness by health district
week ending 15 September 2006*



[] Health district not participating

* Health districts did not participate for the week

Twenty swabs were sent from the sentinel surveillance in the past week. Eighteen swabs were received by virology laboratories. Of these, four influenza viruses were isolated, three as influenza A (yet to be sub-typed) and one as A/New Caledonia/20/1999 (H1N1)-like. The distribution by health district is shown in Table 1.

Table 1.

	CB	OT	SO	Total
A	2	1	0	3
A/New Caledonia/20/1999 (H1N1) - like	0	0	1	1
Total	2	1	1	4

In addition, six influenza A viruses were reported this week from the laboratory-based (non-sentinel) surveillance, three from Canterbury and one each from Hawke's Bay, Otago, and Southland.

Figure 2 shows the cumulative total of influenza isolates confirmed (sentinel and laboratory-based surveillance) to the end of week 37, 15 September 2006. A total of 743 influenza viruses were identified, 375 as A/New York/55/2004 (H3N2) - like, 346 as influenza A (yet to be sub-typed), 17 as A/New Caledonia/20/1999 (H1N1)-like, two as B/Shanghai/361/2002-like, two as B/Malaysia/2506/2004-like, and one as influenza B (yet to be typed).

Figure 2

Cumulative laboratory-confirmed isolates by health district to 15 September 2006

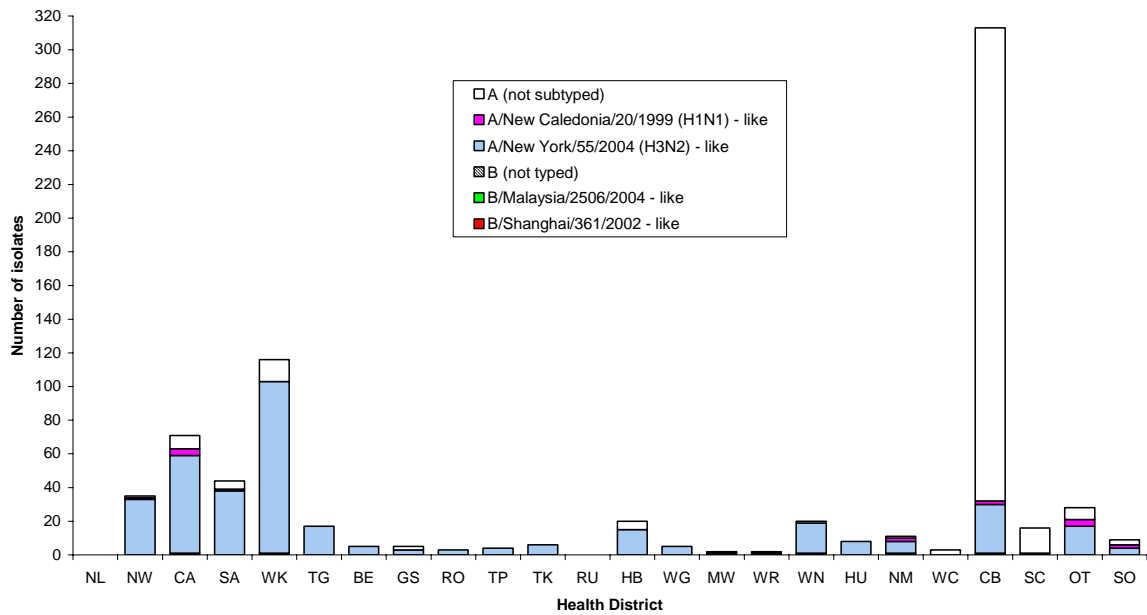


Figure 3 shows the weekly national consultation rates for 2004 and 2005 seasons, and 2006 so far.

Figure 3

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

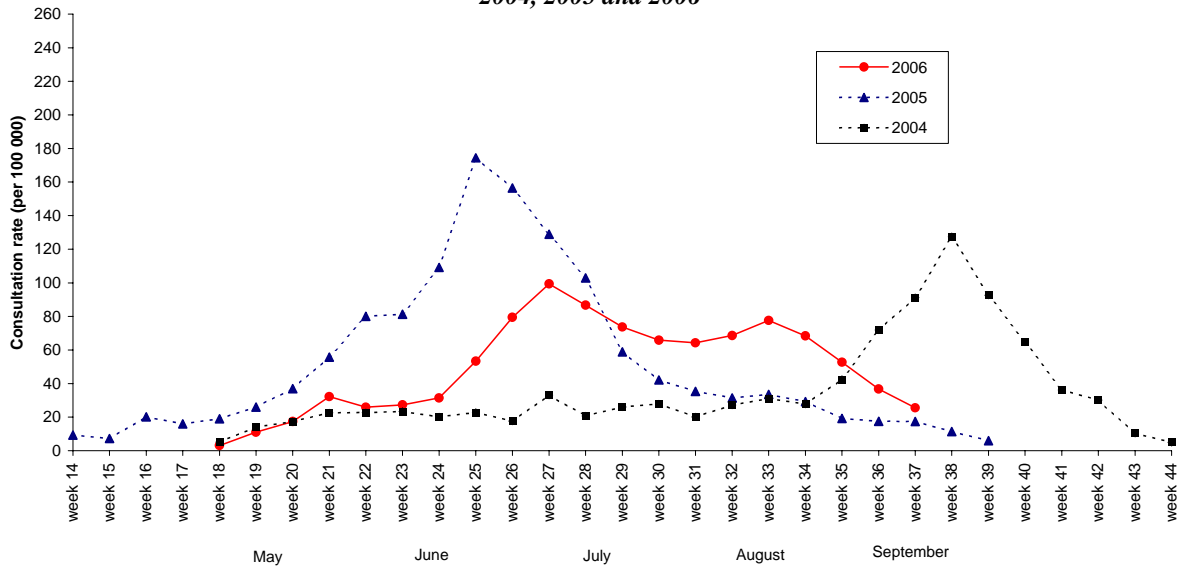
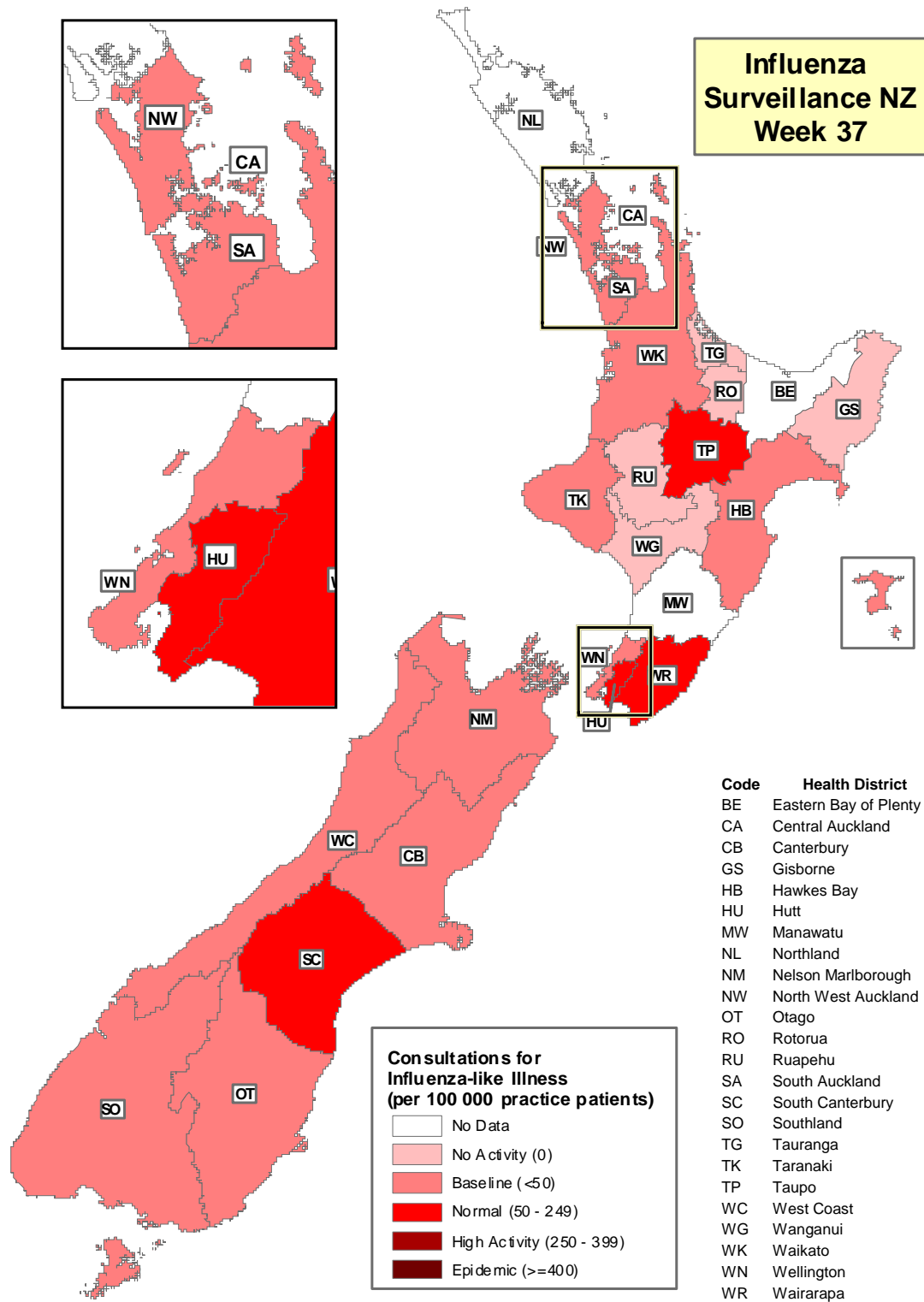


Figure 4 illustrates consultation rates for influenza-like illness mapped by health district for week 37, 2006.

Figure 4



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