

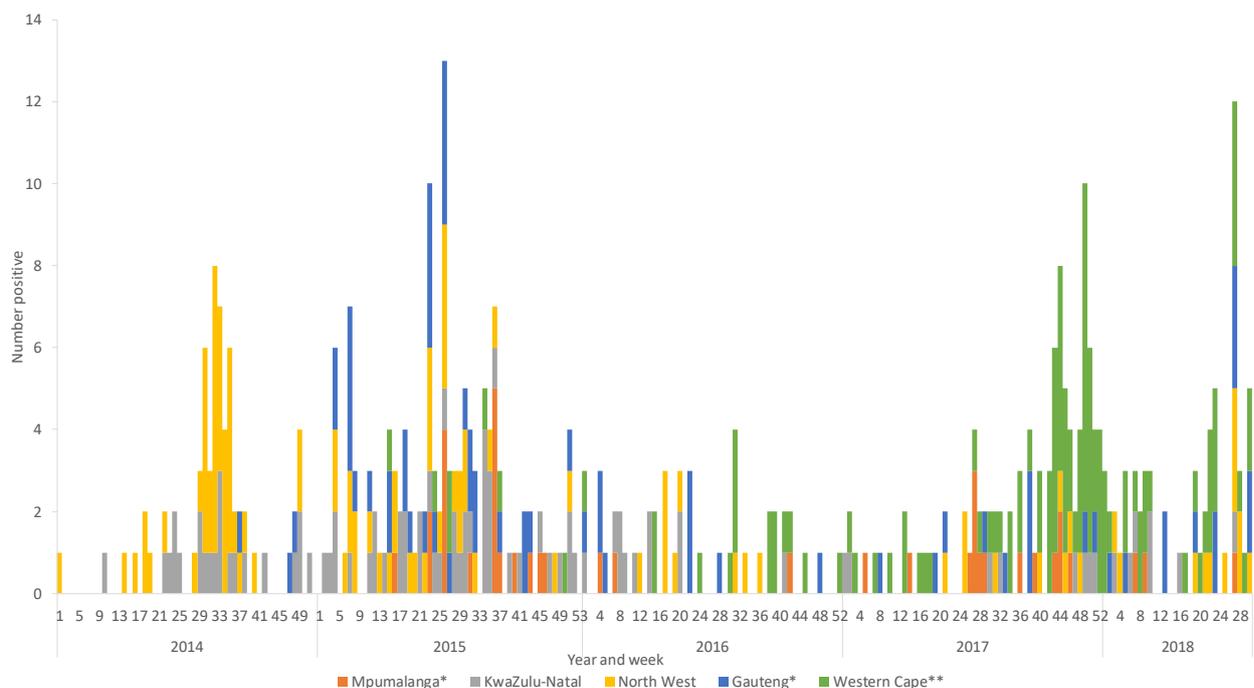
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INCREASE IN PERTUSSIS CASES IN SOUTH AFRICA

An increase in pertussis cases has been reported among children aged <5 years of age from the sentinel sites (Western Cape, Gauteng, Mpumalanga, North West and KwaZulu-Natal) which form part of a pneumonia surveillance programme, and particularly amongst infants 1 year and younger (Figure). An increase, which was limited to the Western Cape sites, was observed from October 2017 to January 2018. However, the latest increase is more generalised. Pertussis, commonly known as ‘whooping cough’ is a vaccine-preventable disease caused by *Bordetella pertussis* and is notifiable according to the Health Act. Immunity following vaccination lasts for 5-6 years. Episodic increases in pertussis cases occur in vaccinated populations every 3-5 years. Clinicians are advised to be on the alert for cases, to conduct diagnostic testing where appropriate, to notify cases and prescribe post-exposure prophylaxis to close and high-risk contacts of suspected or confirmed cases. Of 37 pertussis cases identified between May and July 2018, 20 (54%) were aged < 3 months.

A one-page summary of guidance for clinicians, as well as the latest version of the ‘NICD recommendations for pertussis diagnosis, management and public health response’ may be found on the NICD web page (www.nicd.ac.za) under ‘Alerts’ and on the Diseases A-Z tab, under ‘Pertussis’.

Figure: Number of cases of laboratory-confirmed pertussis cases from pneumonia surveillance and influenza-like illness surveillance programmes, 2014-2018



*Testing from July 2014 **testing from March 2015