

3 SEASONAL DISEASES

a The influenza season, 2017

The 2017 influenza season which started in week 21 (week ending 4 June) is continuing, though the number of specimens received has started to decline. The season peaked in week 26 (week ending 2 July) when 106 specimens were received, with 72 (68%) positive for influenza. Since then the number of specimens received per week has dropped to an average of 75 (range 69-80). A total of 499 influenza detections has been made, the majority of which has been influenza A(H3N2) which was detected in 415 patients. Influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 has been detected in 35, and influenza B in 44 patients. In addition, dual infection of influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 and A(H3N2) was detected in two patients, influenza A (untyped as yet), in one patient. Influenza has been detected in all eight provinces with Viral Watch sites. In the first three months of the year, influenza A(H3N2) was detected in five patients who had either travelled abroad, or had contact

with travellers from the northern hemisphere. Additionally, 70 specimens have been received from patients at a point of entry into South Africa, and influenza was detected in 33 of these patients.

Influenza B was detected in an ill contact of a 15-year-old male who died in hospital following rapid onset of pneumonia and respiratory distress. Influenza B infection has been associated with deaths in otherwise healthy young adults often secondary to cardiac complications such as pericarditis or arrhythmia.

Source: Centre for Respiratory Diseases and Meningitis, NICD-NHLS; (cheryl@nicd.ac.za)

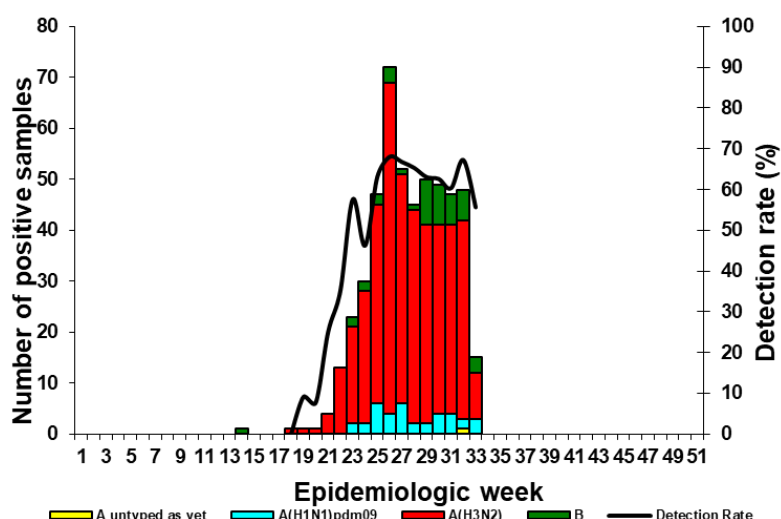


Figure 4. Findings from the influenza surveillance 'Viral Watch' programme indicating the number of positive samples by influenza types and subtypes and detection rate by epidemiological week in 2017 (only reported for weeks with >10 specimens submitted). Patients known to have acquired influenza abroad or from contact with travellers are not included in the epidemiological curve.