

### 3 SEASONAL DISEASES

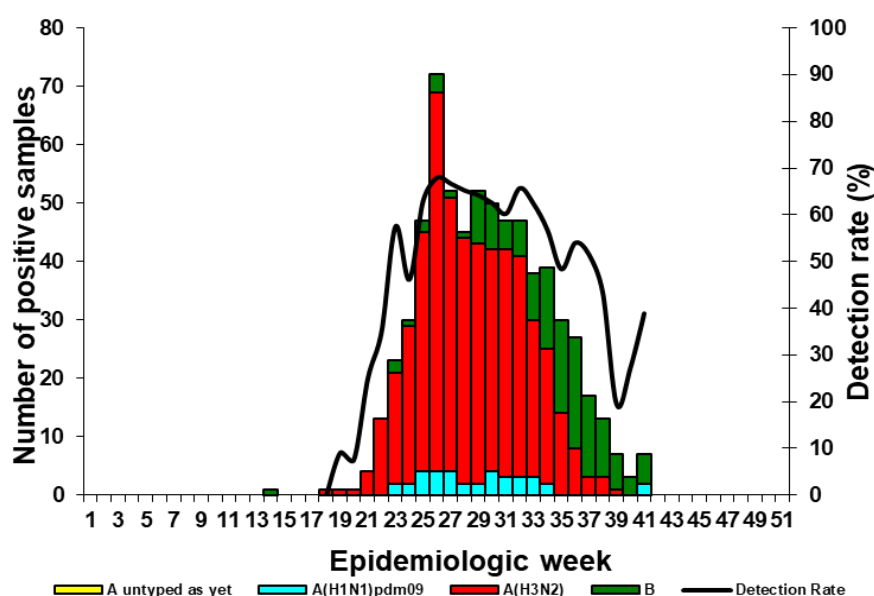
#### a The influenza season, 2017

The 2017 influenza season that started in week 21 (week ending 4 June) is coming to an end. The season peaked in week 26 (week ending 2 July) when 106 specimens were received, with 72 (68%) positive for influenza. A total of 661 influenza detections has been made, the majority of which has been influenza A(H3N2) which was detected in 491 (74%) of patients. Influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 has been detected in 35 (5%), and influenza B in 135 (20%) patients. In addition dual infection of influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 and A(H3N2) was detected in two, and influenza A(H3N2) and B in one patient. The proportion of specimens positive for influenza B has risen from below 20% in the first 3 months of the season, to 70% - 100% per week during September. Although the detection rate for the week ending 15 October has risen, this is mainly due to the decline in the number of

specimens received.

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, 96 specimens have been received from patients at a point of entry into South Africa, and influenza was detected in 40 of these patients.

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



#### b An update on avian influenza in South Africa

Since the first confirmed case of highly pathogenic avian influenza A(H5N8) in poultry in Mpumalanga on 19 June 2017, the outbreak has spread widely throughout the country to include other bird species and provinces.

As at 18 October 2017, 92 localized outbreaks in birds (29 commercial poultry farms, 23 wild birds, 16 birds kept as hobby/zoo and eight backyard farms) have been reported by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF). Seven of the nine provinces (Mpumalanga, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Western Cape, North West, Eastern Cape and Free State) have been affected. The majority

of outbreaks were reported from Western Cape Province (61/92, 66%). The latest World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) reports, with maps of areas with reported outbreaks may be found at <http://www.oie.int>.

While the risk of transmission to humans is exceedingly low, surveillance to detect possible human infections in persons exposed to the virus from affected farms is ongoing. To date, 74 workers who had been exposed to infected birds in Gauteng and the Western Cape provinces and who reported respiratory symptoms have been tested by PCR and none have tested positive for avian influenza A