

# WEEKLY RESPIRATORY PATHOGENS SURVEILLANCE REPORT



NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR  
COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Division of the National Health Laboratory Service

SOUTH AFRICA WEEK 42 2020

## CONTENTS

Surveillance programme description	2
Comments	3
Systematic Influenza-like illness (ILI) surveillance	4-6
Influenza	
Respiratory syncytial virus	
SARS-CoV-2	
Influenza-like illness (ILI) Viral Watch	7-9
Influenza	
SARS-CoV-2	
National syndromic surveillance for pneumonia	10-13
Influenza	
Respiratory syncytial virus	
SARS-CoV-2	
Summary of laboratory confirmed SARS-CoV-2 cases	14

## CUMULATIVE DATA FROM



## HIGHLIGHTS: WEEK 42

- The 2020 influenza season has not yet started. Only one detection of influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 has been made in week 24 (week starting 8 June 2020), since the localised outbreak of influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 and to a lesser extent influenza B(Victoria) in the Western Cape Province, in the first three months of the year.

- In recent weeks, there has been an increase in RSV detections in pneumonia surveillance and to a lesser extent in the ILI programme. The RSV detections breached the low threshold in week 39 (week starting 21 September) as determined by Moving Epidemic Method.

- Since the last report 17 additional patients tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 of which 14 were detected in the current reporting week (week 42) 6 in SARI and 8 in ILI surveillance. To date, 631 cases have been detected from all surveillance programmes. Of the 442 hospitalised COVID-19 cases with available data on outcome, 57 (13%) died.

# INFLUENZA, RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS AND SARS-CoV-2 SURVEILLANCE REPORT

WEEK 42 2020 | REPORTING PERIOD 1 JANUARY 2020 TO 18 OCTOBER 2020

## PROGRAMME DESCRIPTIONS

Programme	Influenza-like illness (ILI)	Viral Watch	National syndromic surveillance for pneumonia
<b>Start year</b>	2012	1984	2009
<b>Provinces*</b>	KZ NW WC**	EC FS GP LP MP NC NW WC	GP KZ MP NW WC
<b>Type of site</b>	Primary health care clinics	General practitioners	Public hospitals
<b>Case definition</b>	An acute respiratory illness with a temperature ( $\geq 38^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) and cough, & onset $\leq 10$ days	An acute respiratory illness with a temperature ( $\geq 38^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) and cough, & onset $\leq 10$ days	Acute (symptom onset $\leq 10$ days) or chronic (symptom onset $> 10$ ) lower respiratory tract infection
<b>Specimens collected</b>	Oropharyngeal & nasopharyngeal swabs	Throat and/or nasal swabs or Nasopharyngeal swabs	Oropharyngeal & nasopharyngeal swabs
<b>Main pathogens tested***</b>	INF RSV BP SARS-CoV-2****	INF RSV BP SARS-CoV-2****	INF RSV BP SARS-CoV-2****

### Epidemic Threshold

Thresholds are calculated using the Moving Epidemic Method (MEM), a sequential analysis using the R Language, available from: <http://CRAN.R-project.org/web/package=mem> designed to calculate the duration, start and end of the annual influenza epidemic. MEM uses the 40th, 90th and 97.5th percentiles established from available years of historical data to calculate thresholds of activity. Thresholds of activity for influenza and RSV are defined as follows: Below seasonal threshold, Low activity, Moderate activity, High activity, Very high activity. For influenza, thresholds from outpatient influenza like illness (Viral Watch Programme) are used as an indicator of disease transmission in the community and thresholds from pneumonia surveillance are used as an indicator of impact of disease.

\* EC: Eastern Cape; FS: Free State; GP: Gauteng; KZ: KwaZulu-Natal; LP: Limpopo; MP: Mpumalanga; NC: Northern Cape; NW: North West; WC: Western Cape

\*\*Started in 2019

\*\*\*INF: influenza virus; RSV: respiratory syncytial virus; BP: Bordetella pertussis

\*\*\*\*SARS-CoV-2: Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2

# INFLUENZA, RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS AND SARS-CoV-2 SURVEILLANCE REPORT

WEEK 42 2020 | REPORTING PERIOD 1 JANUARY 2020 TO 18 OCTOBER 2020

## COMMENTS

### Influenza

The 2020 influenza season has not yet started although sustained detections of influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 and to a lesser extent influenza B(Victoria) were made from Western Cape Province, in all surveillance programmes from week 2 to week 15. In week 24 (week ending 14th June), one influenza case was detected in Gauteng province.

**ILI programme:** In 2020 to date, specimens from 1214 patients were received from 4 ILI sites. Influenza was detected in 52 specimens (all from Western Cape province), 36 (69%) were identified as influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, one (2%) influenza A subtype inconclusive, 12 (23%) as influenza B (Victoria) and three (6%) B lineage inconclusive (Figure1 and Table1).

**Viral Watch programme:** During the same period, specimens were received from 365 patients from Viral Watch sites in 8 provinces. Influenza was detected in 78 patients and five imported cases detected in the first weeks of the year. Of the 73 local cases, all were influenza A(H1N1)pdm09. (Figure4 and Table4).

**Pneumonia surveillance:** Since the beginning of 2020, specimens from 3375 patients with severe respiratory illness (SRI) were received from the 6 sentinel sites. Influenza was detected in 26 patients (all from Western Cape Province), of which 21 (81%) were influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, one (4%) influenza A subtype inconclusive and four (15%) influenza B(Victoria) (Figure7 and Table 6).

### Respiratory syncytial virus

In recent weeks, there has been an increase in RSV detections in pneumonia surveillance and to a lesser extent in the ILI programme. The RSV detections breached the low threshold in week 39 (week starting 21 September) as determined by Moving Epidemic Method.

**ILI programme:** In 2020 to date, 1214 specimens were tested and RSV was detected in specimens of 56 (5%) patients.

**Viral Watch programme:** During the same period, 365 specimens were tested and RSV has not been detected.

**Pneumonia surveillance:** Since the beginning of 2020, 3375 specimens were tested and RSV was detected in specimens of 373 (11%) patients.

### SARS-CoV-2 (Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2)

Testing for SARS-CoV-2 was initiated in all three surveillance programmes in week 10 (week starting 2 March 2020)

**ILI programme:** In 2020 to date, specimens from 980 patients were tested and SARS-CoV-2 was detected in 143 (15%) patients.

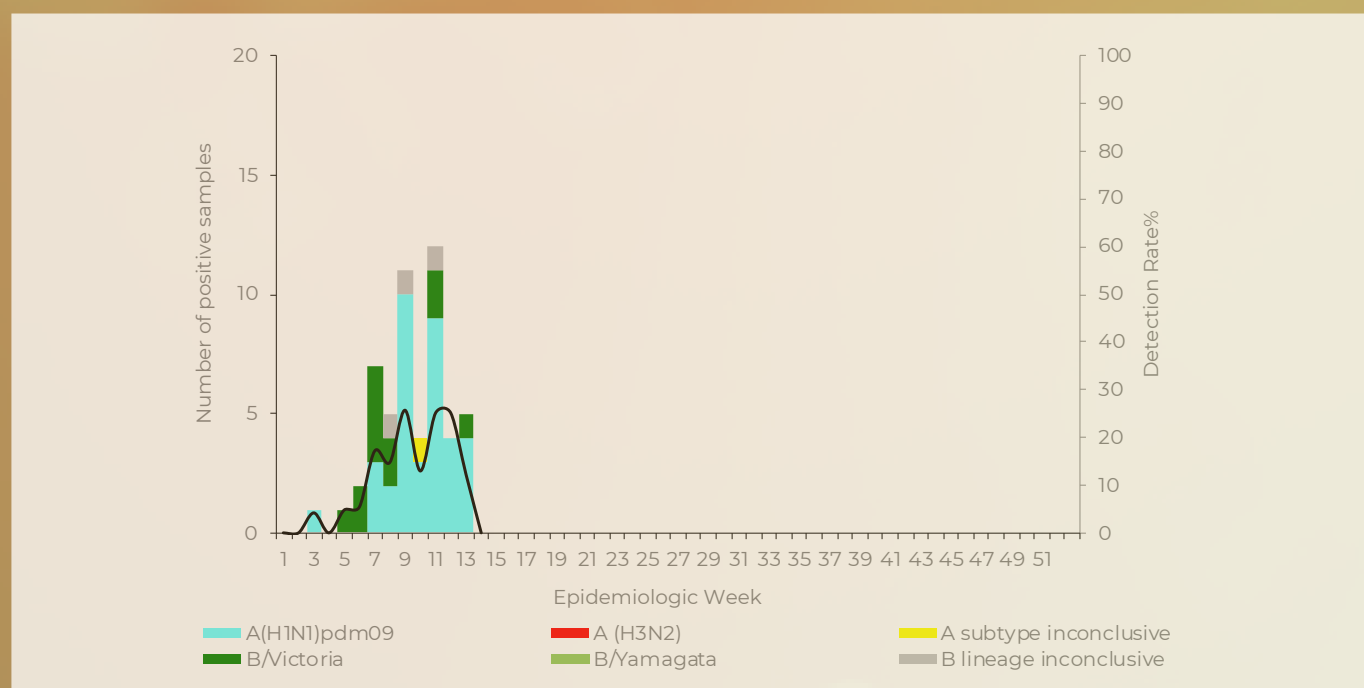
**Viral Watch programme:** In 2020 to date, specimens were tested from 257 patients and SARS-CoV-2 was detected in 35 (14%) patients.

**Pneumonia surveillance:** In 2020 to date, specimens from 2873 patients with severe respiratory illness (SRI) were tested and SARS-CoV-2 was detected in 453 (16%) patients.

# INFLUENZA, RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS AND SARS-CoV-2 SURVEILLANCE REPORT

WEEK 42 2020 | REPORTING PERIOD 1 JANUARY 2020 TO 18 OCTOBER 2020

## INFLUENZA-LIKE ILLNESS (ILI) SURVEILLANCE PRIMARY HEALTH CARE CLINICS



**Figure 1.** Number of positive samples\* by influenza subtype and lineage and detection rate\*\* by week

\*Specimens from patients with influenza-like illnesses at 4 sentinel sites in 3 provinces  
 \*\*Only reported for weeks with >10 specimens submitted  
 Inconclusive: insufficient viral load in sample and unable to characterise further

**Table 1.** Cumulative number of influenza subtype and lineage and total number of samples tested by clinic and province

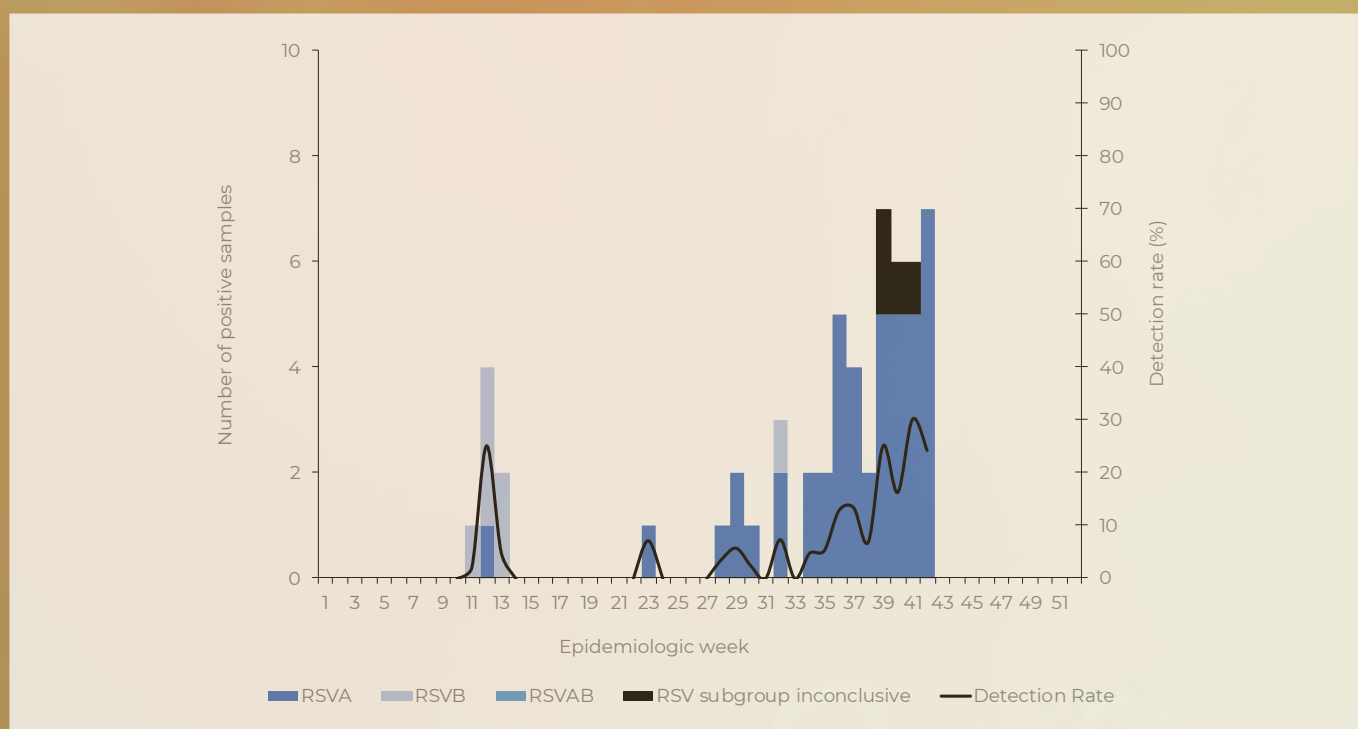
Clinic (Province)	A(H1N1) pdm09	A(H3N2)	A subtype inconclusive	B/Victoria	B/Yamagata	B lineage inconclusive	Total samples
Eastridge (WC)	33	0	1	12	0	3	493
Edendale Gateway (KZ)	0	0	0	0	0	0	147
Jouberton (NW)	0	0	0	0	0	0	284
Mitchell's Plain (WC)	3	0	0	0	0	0	290
<b>Total:</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1214</b>

KZ: KwaZulu-Natal; NW: North West; WC: Western Cape  
 Inconclusive: insufficient viral load in sample and unable to characterise further

# INFLUENZA, RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS AND SARS-CoV-2 SURVEILLANCE REPORT

WEEK 42 2020 | REPORTING PERIOD 1 JANUARY 2020 TO 18 OCTOBER 2020

## INFLUENZA-LIKE ILLNESS (ILI) SURVEILLANCE PRIMARY HEALTH CARE CLINICS



**Figure 2.** Number of samples testing positive for respiratory syncytial virus by subgroup and detection rate by week

Inconclusive: insufficient viral load in sample and unable to characterise further  
RSV AB: Both RSV A and B subgroup identified

**Table 2.** Cumulative number of respiratory syncytial virus subgroups identified and total number of samples tested by clinic and province

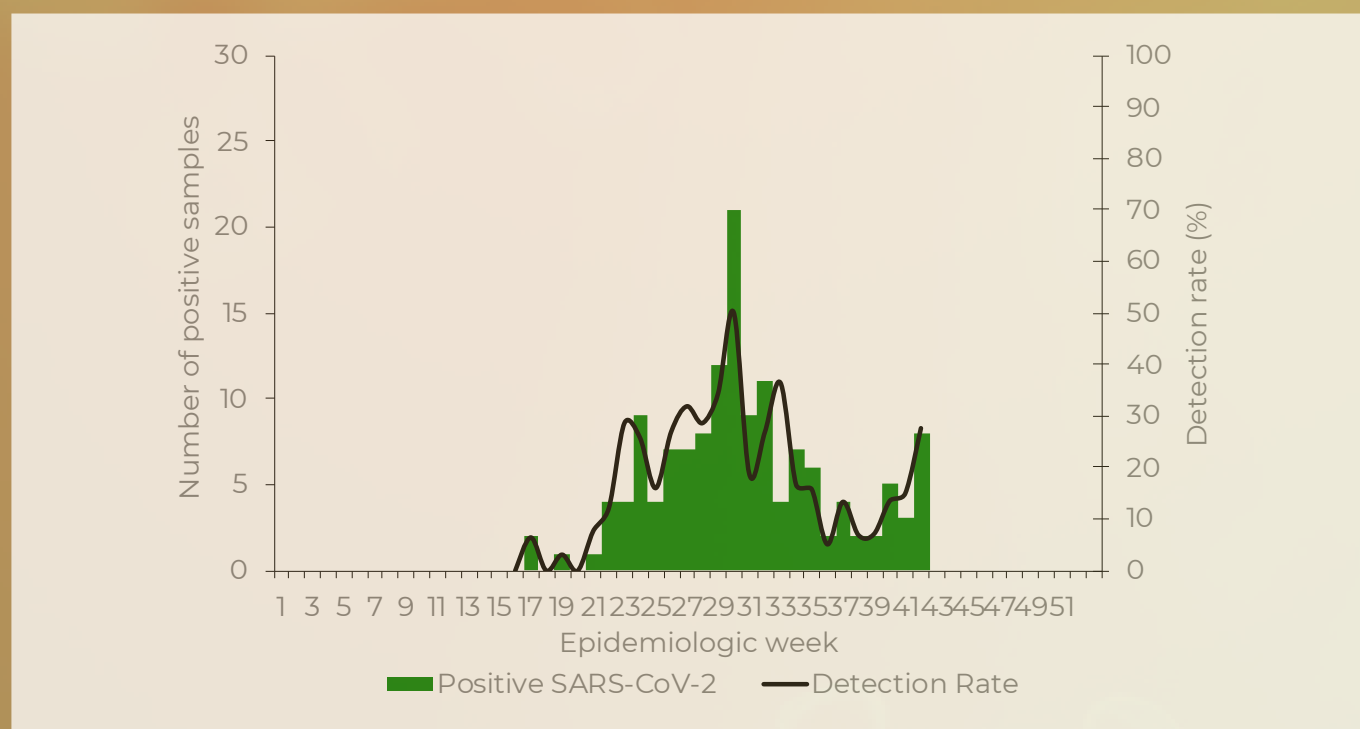
Clinic (Province)	RSVA	RSVB	RSVAB	RSV subgroup inconclusive	Total samples
Eastridge (WC)	32	2	0	2	493
Edendale Gateway (KZ)	1	5	0	0	147
Jouberton (NW)	1	0	0	2	284
Mitchell's Plain (WC)	11	0	0	0	290
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1214</b>

KZ: KwaZulu-Natal; NW: North West; WC: Western Cape  
Inconclusive: insufficient viral load in sample and unable to characterise further  
RSV AB: Both RSV A and B subgroup identified

# INFLUENZA, RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS AND SARS-CoV-2 SURVEILLANCE REPORT

WEEK 42 2020 | REPORTING PERIOD 02 MARCH 2020 TO 18 OCTOBER 2020

## INFLUENZA-LIKE ILLNESS (ILI) SURVEILLANCE PRIMARY HEALTH CARE CLINICS



**Figure 3.** Number of samples testing positive for SARS-CoV-2\*, and detection rate by week

\*Specimens from patients with influenza-like illnesses at 4 sentinel sites in 3 provinces

**Table 3.** Cumulative number of SARS-CoV-2 identified and total number of samples tested by clinic and province

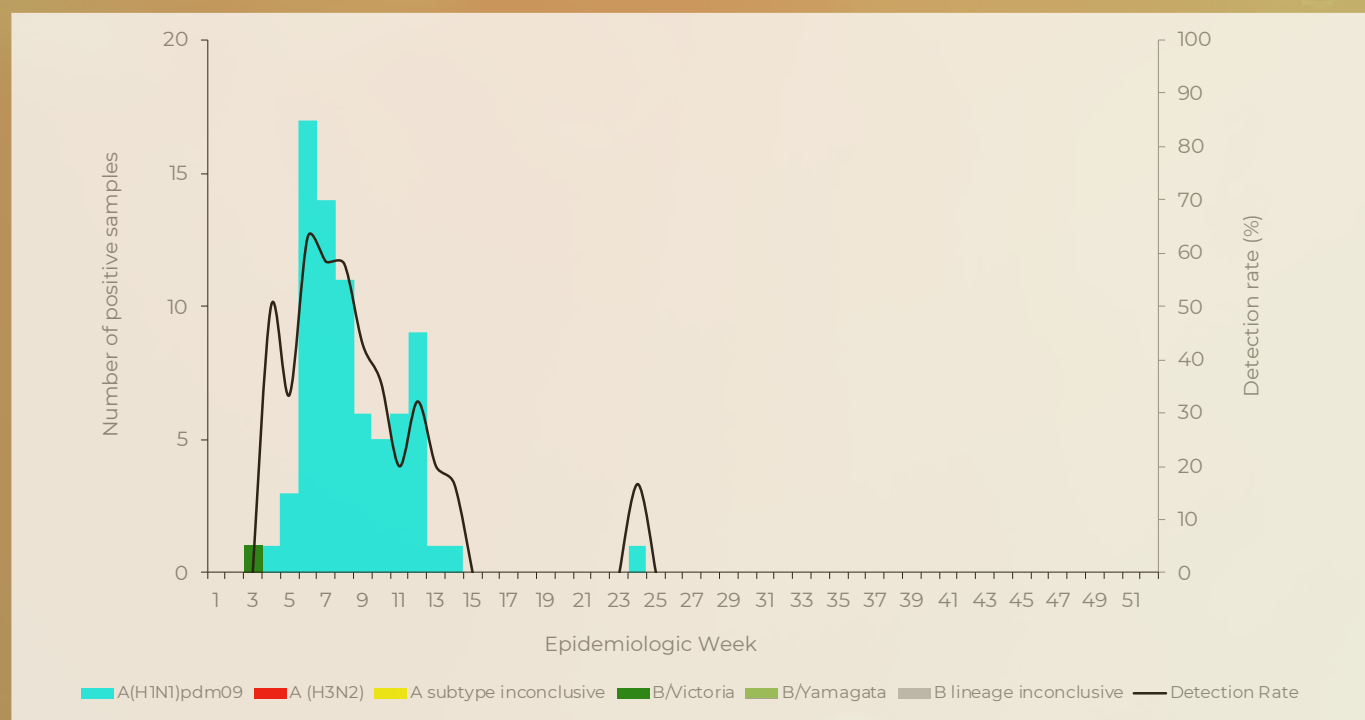
Clinic (Province)	SARS-CoV-2 positive	Total samples tested
Eastridge (WC)	26	390
Edendale Gateway (KZ)	23	97
Jouberton (NW)	56	235
Mitchell's Plain (WC)	38	258
<b>Total:</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>980</b>

KZ: KwaZulu-Natal; NW: North West; WCP: Western Cape

# INFLUENZA, RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS AND SARS-CoV-2 SURVEILLANCE REPORT

WEEK 42 2020 | REPORTING PERIOD 1 JANUARY 2020 TO 18 OCTOBER 2020

## INFLUENZA-LIKE ILLNESS (ILI) SURVEILLANCE VIRAL WATCH



**Figure 4.** Number of positive samples\* by influenza subtype and lineage and detection rate\*\* by week

\*Specimens from patients with Influenza-like illnesses at 92 sentinel sites in 8 provinces  
 \*\* Only reported for weeks with >10 specimens submitted.  
 Inconclusive: insufficient viral load in sample and unable to characterise further

**Table 4.** Cumulative number of influenza subtype and lineage and total number of samples tested by province

Province	A(H1N1) pdm09	A(H3N2)	A subtype inconclusive	B/Victoria	B/Yamagata	B lineage inconclusive	Total samples
Eastern Cape	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Free State	0	0	0	0	0	0	14
Gauteng	1	0	0	0	0	0	160
Limpopo	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Mpumalanga	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
North West	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northern Cape	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Western Cape	72	0	0	0	0	0	173
<b>Total:</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>365</b>

Inconclusive: insufficient viral load in sample and unable to characterise further

From 01 January 2020 to date, 10 patients were tested for influenza at the time of entry into South Africa following travel abroad and influenza was detected in three patients, of which one influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 and two influenza A(H3N2).

Patients known to have acquired influenza abroad are not included in the table or epidemiological curve.

# INFLUENZA, RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS AND SARS-CoV-2 SURVEILLANCE REPORT

WEEK 42 2020 | REPORTING PERIOD 1 JANUARY 2020 TO 18 OCTOBER 2020

## INFLUENZA-LIKE ILLNESS (ILI) SURVEILLANCE VIRAL WATCH

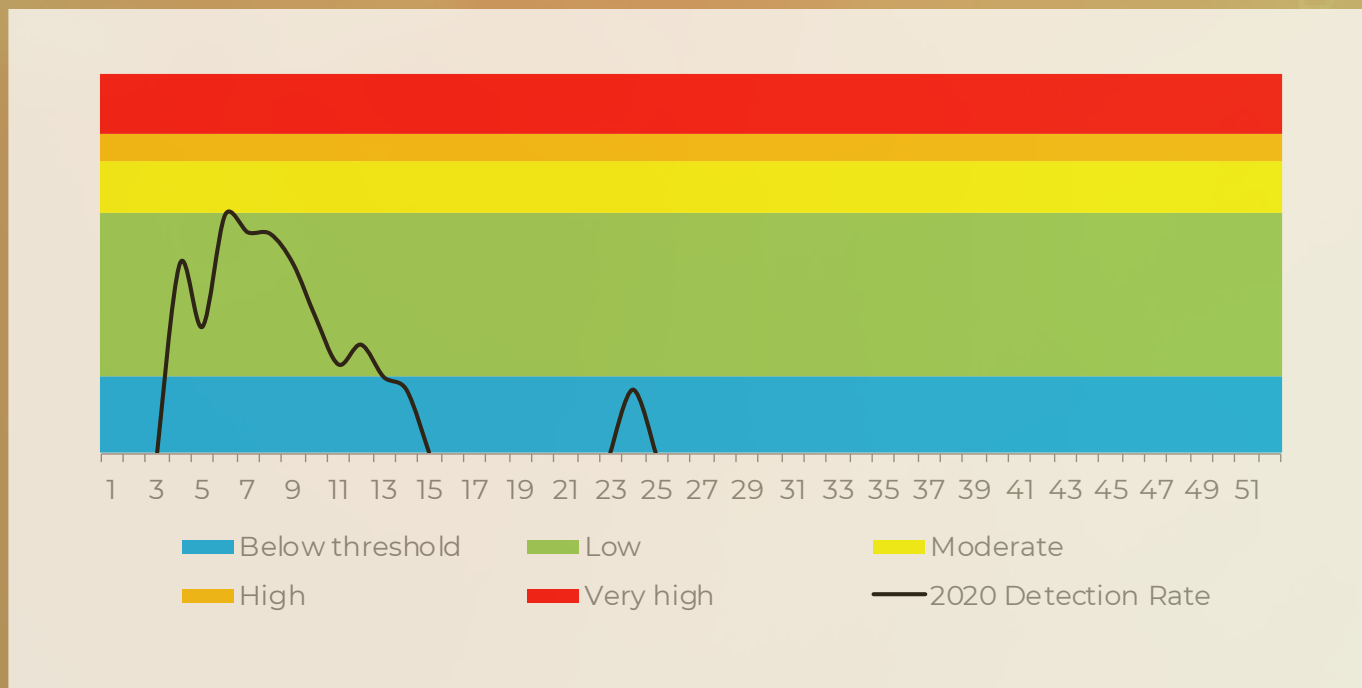


Figure 5. ILI surveillance (Viral Watch) percentage influenza detections and epidemic thresholds\*

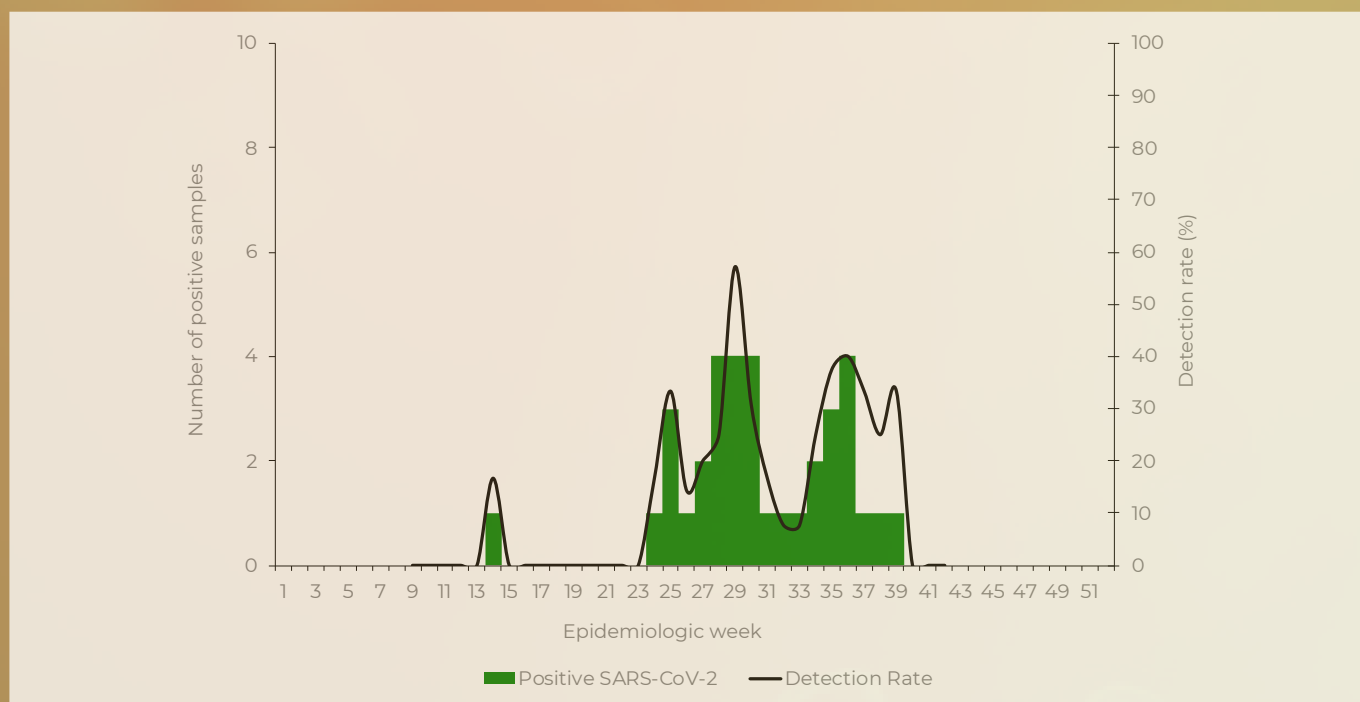
\*Thresholds based on 2010-2019 data



# INFLUENZA, RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS AND SARS-CoV-2 SURVEILLANCE REPORT

WEEK 42 2020 | REPORTING PERIOD 02 MARCH 2020 TO 18 OCTOBER 2020

## INFLUENZA-LIKE ILLNESS (ILI) SURVEILLANCE VIRAL WATCH



**Figure 6.** Number of samples testing positive for SARS-CoV-2\*, and detection rate by week

\*Specimens from patients with Influenza-like illnesses at 92 sentinel sites in 8 provinces

**Table 5.** Cumulative number of SARS-CoV-2 identified and total number of samples tested by province

Province	SARS-CoV-2 positive	Total samples tested
Eastern Cape	0	3
Free State	1	14
Gauteng	25	146
Limpopo	0	2
Mpumalanga	1	5
North West	0	0
Northern Cape	0	2
Western Cape	8	85
<b>Total:</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>257</b>

# INFLUENZA, RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS AND SARS-CoV-2 SURVEILLANCE REPORT

WEEK 42 2020 | REPORTING PERIOD 1 JANUARY 2020 TO 18 OCTOBER 2020

## NATIONAL SYNDROMIC SURVEILLANCE FOR PNEUMONIA

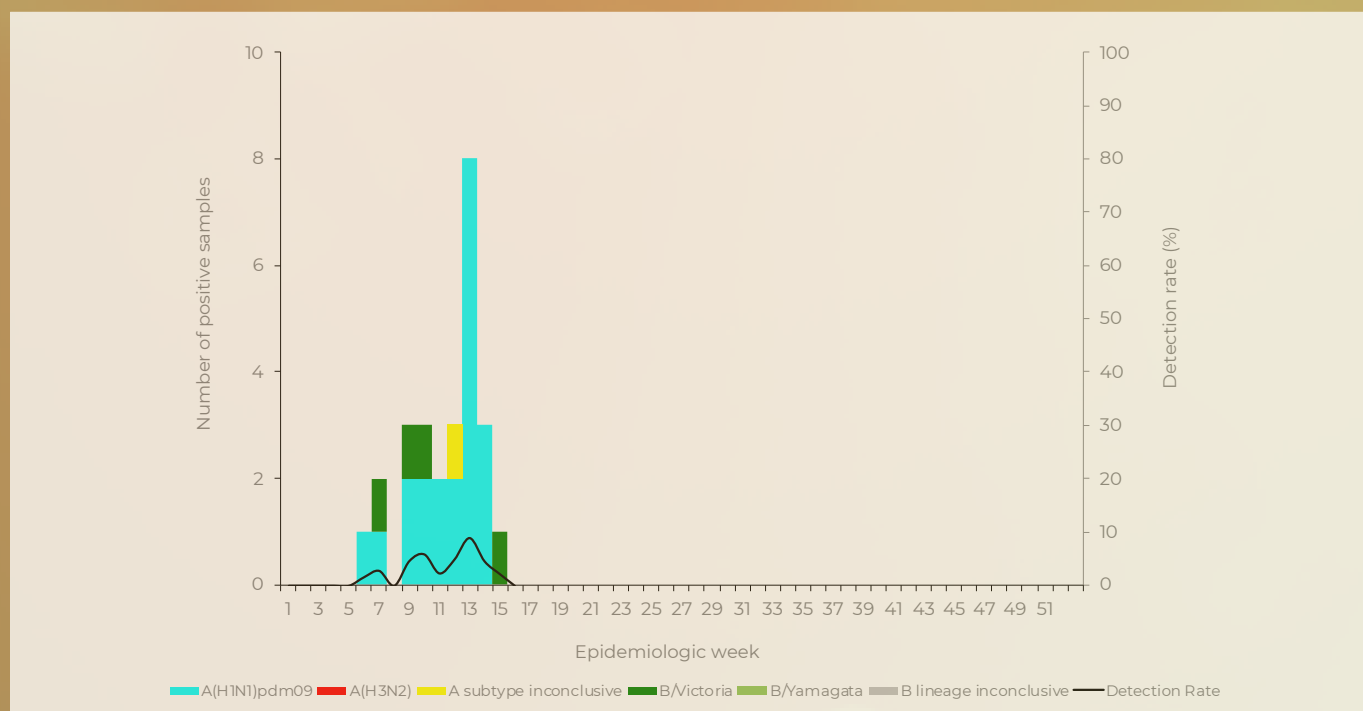


Figure 7. Number of positive samples\* by influenza subtype and lineage and detection rate\*\* by week

\*Specimens from patients hospitalised with pneumonia at 6 sentinel sites in 5 provinces

\*\*Only reported for weeks with >10 specimens submitted

Inconclusive: insufficient viral load in sample and unable to characterise further

Table 6. Cumulative number of identified influenza subtype and lineage and total number of samples tested by hospital

Hospital (Province)	A(H1N1) pdm09	A(H3N2)	A subtype inconclusive	B/Victoria	B/Yamagata	B lineage inconclusive	Total samples
Edendale (KZ)	0	0	0	0	0	0	571
Helen Joseph-Rahima Moosa (GP)	0	0	0	0	0	0	743
Klerksdorp-Tshepong (NW)	0	0	0	0	0	0	569
Mapulaneng-Matikwana (MP)	0	0	0	0	0	0	260
Red Cross (WC)	19	0	0	2	0	0	849
Mitchell's Plain (WC)	2	0	1	2	0	0	383
<b>Total:</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3375</b>

GP: Gauteng; KZ: KwaZulu-Natal; NW: North West; MP: Mpumalanga; WC: Western Cape

Inconclusive: insufficient viral load in sample and unable to characterise further

# INFLUENZA, RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS AND SARS-CoV-2 SURVEILLANCE REPORT

WEEK 42 2020 | REPORTING PERIOD 1 JANUARY 2020 TO 18 OCTOBER 2020

## NATIONAL SYNDROMIC SURVEILLANCE FOR PNEUMONIA

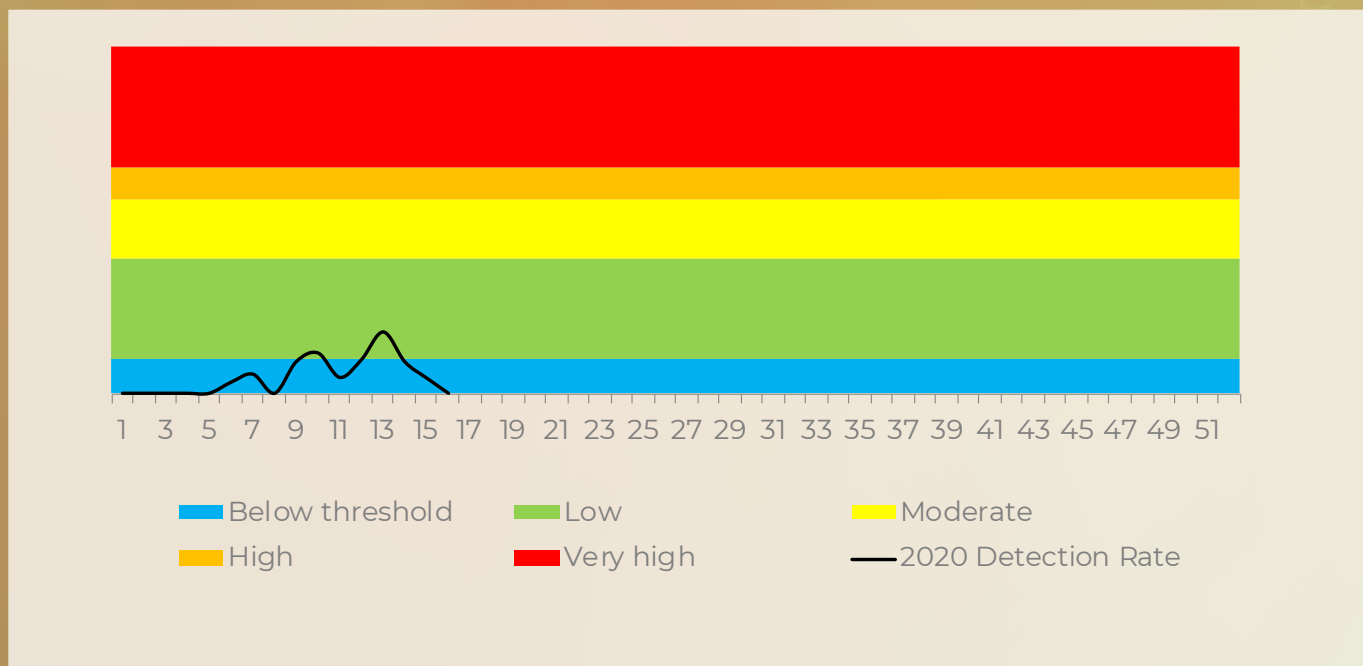


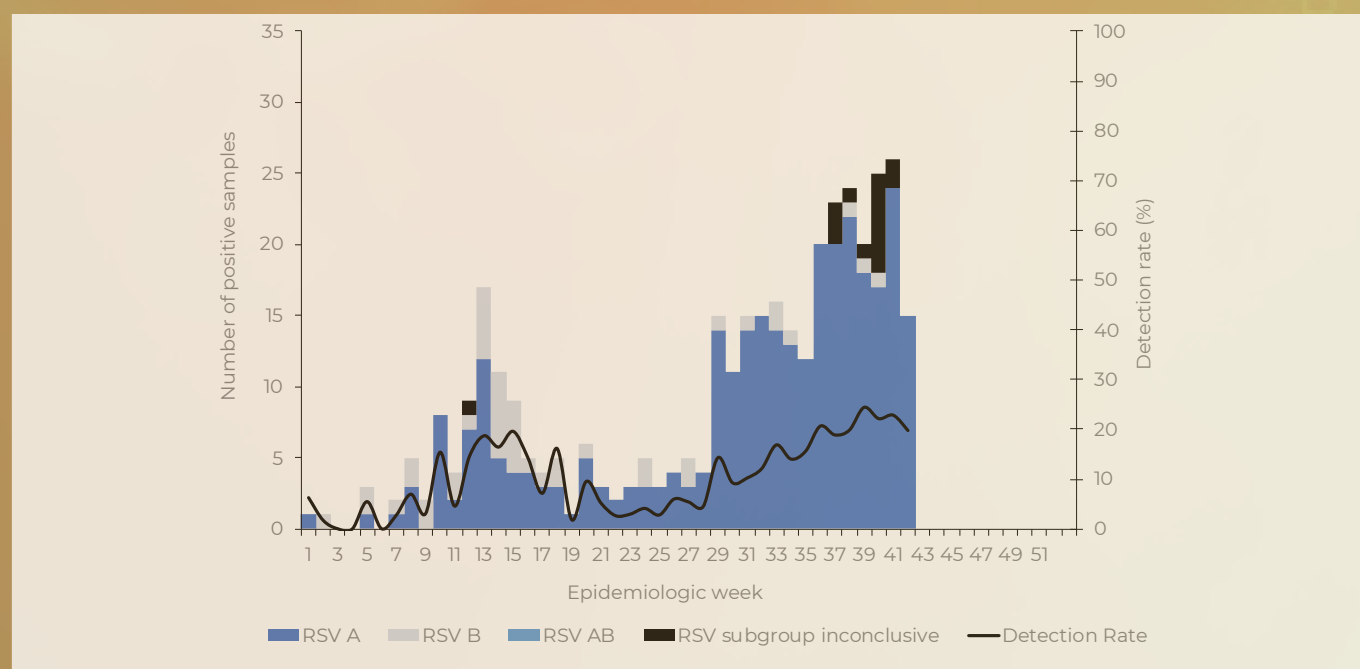
Figure 8. National syndromic surveillance for pneumonia percentage influenza detections and epidemic thresholds\*

\*Thresholds based on 2010-2019 data

# INFLUENZA, RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS AND SARS-CoV-2 SURVEILLANCE REPORT

WEEK 42 2020 | REPORTING PERIOD 1 JANUARY 2020 TO 18 OCTOBER 2020

## NATIONAL SYNDROMIC SURVEILLANCE FOR PNEUMONIA



**Figure 9.** Number of samples testing positive for respiratory syncytial virus by subgroup and detection rate by week

Inconclusive: insufficient viral load in sample and unable to characterise further  
RSV AB: Both RSV A and B subgroup identified

**Table 7:** Cumulative number of respiratory syncytial virus subgroups identified and total number of samples tested by hospital

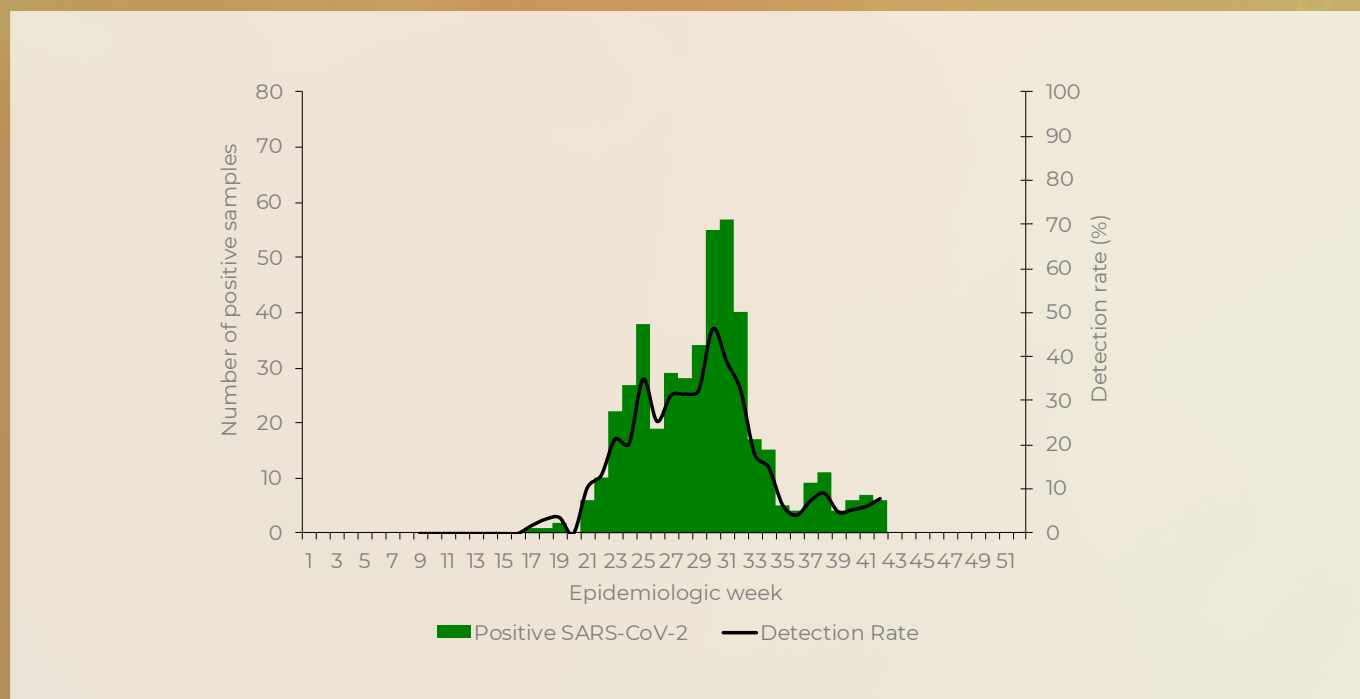
Hospital (Province)	RSVA	RSVB	RSVAB	RSV subgroup inconclusive	Total samples
Edendale (KZ)	3	9	0	1	571
Helen Joseph-Rahima Moosa (GP)	42	10	0	0	743
Klerksdorp-Tshepong (NW)	2	0	0	1	569
Mapulaneng-Matikwana (MP)	0	0	0	0	260
Red Cross (WC)	207	25	0	8	849
Mitchell's Plain (WC)	60	0	0	5	383
<b>Total:</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>3375</b>

GP: Gauteng; KZ: KwaZulu-Natal; NW: North West; MP: Mpumalanga; WC: Western Cape  
Inconclusive: insufficient viral load in sample and unable to characterise further  
RSV AB: Both RSV A and B subgroup identified

# INFLUENZA, RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS AND SARS-CoV-2 SURVEILLANCE REPORT

WEEK 42 2020 | REPORTING PERIOD 02 MARCH 2020 TO 18 OCTOBER 2020

## NATIONAL SYNDROMIC SURVEILLANCE FOR PNEUMONIA



**Figure 10.** Number of samples testing positive for SARS-CoV-2\*, and detection rate by week

\*Specimens from patients hospitalised with pneumonia at 6 sentinel sites in 5 provinces

**Table 8.** Cumulative number of identified SARS-CoV-2 and total number of samples tested by hospital

Hospital (Province)	SARS-CoV-2 positive	Total samples tested
Edendale (KZ)	98	496
Helen Joseph-Rahima Moosa (GP)	124	608
Klerksdorp-Tshepong (NW)	130	494
Mapulaneng-Matikwana (MP)	11	211
Red Cross (WC)	30	707
Mitchell's Plain (WC)	60	357
<b>Total:</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>2873</b>

GP: Gauteng; KZ: KwaZulu-Natal; NW: North West; MP: Mpumalanga; WC: Western Cape

# INFLUENZA, RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS AND SARS-CoV-2 SURVEILLANCE REPORT

WEEK 42 2020 | REPORTING PERIOD 02 MARCH 2020 TO 18 OCTOBER 2020

## SUMMARY OF LABORATORY CONFIRMED SARS-COV-2 CASES

**Table 8.** Characteristics of laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19, enrolled in influenza-like illness (ILI) and pneumonia surveillance programmes, South Africa, 2 March - 18 October 2020

Characteristic	Influenza-like illness (ILI), public-sector, n=143 (%)	Pneumonia, n=453 (%)
<b>Age group</b>		
0-9	21/143 (15)	39/453 (9)
10-19	12/143 (8)	4/453 (1)
20-39	67/143 (47)	89/453 (20)
40-59	33/143 (23)	173/453 (38)
60-79	10/143 (7)	140/453 (31)
≥80	0/143 (0)	8/453 (2)
<b>Sex-female</b>	75/143 (52)	273/453 (60)
<b>Province*</b>		
Gauteng	N/A	124/453 (27)
KwaZulu-Natal	23/143 (16)	98/453 (22)
Mpumalanga	N/A	11/453 (2)
North West	56/143 (39)	130/453 (29)
Western Cape	64/143 (45)	90/453 (20)
<b>Race</b>		
Black	93/139 (67)	364/446 (82)
Coloured	46/139 (33)	60/446 (13)
Asian/Indian	0/139 (0)	18/446 (4)
Other	0/139 (0)	4/446 (<1)
<b>Presentation</b>		
Fever	135/139 (97)	270/446 (61)
Cough	138/139 (99)	442/446 (99)
Shortness of breath	34/139 (24)	358/446 (81)
Chest pain	50/139 (36)	212/446 (48)
Diarrhoea	17/139 (12)	30/446 (7)

# INFLUENZA, RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS AND SARS-CoV-2 SURVEILLANCE REPORT

WEEK 42 2020 | REPORTING PERIOD 02 MARCH 2020 TO 18 OCTOBER 2020

Characteristic	Influenza-like illness (ILI), public-sector, n=143 (%)	Pneumonia, n=453 (%)
<b>Underlying conditions</b>		
Hypertension	9/139 (6)	56/446 (13)
Cardiac	0/139 (0)	8/446 (2)
Lung disease	0/139 (0)	1/446 (<1)
Diabetes	2/139 (1)	99/446 (22)
Cancer	0/139 (0)	1/446 (<1)
Tuberculosis	0/139 (0)	13/446 (3)
HIV-infection	18/139 (13)	92/446 (21)
Other **	4/139 (3)	72/446 (16)
<b>Management</b>		
Oxygen therapy	1/139 (<1)	288/446 (65)
ICU admission	N/A	16/446 (4)
Ventilation	N/A	13/446 (3)
<b>Outcome***</b>		
Died	0/139 (0)	57/442 (13)

\* ILI surveillance not conducted in Gauteng & Mpumalanga provinces

\*\* Chronic lung, liver and kidney disease, organ transplant, pregnancy, malnutrition, obesity, tracheostomy, prematurity, seizure, stroke, anaemia, asplenia, burns, Systemic lupus erythematosus, seizures

\*\*\* Outcome includes patients who are still hospitalised, have been discharged or referred, and those who died

**Note:** Children may be over-represented amongst hospitalised patients due to the inclusion of a large paediatric hospital in Cape Town.

Of the 57 patients who died, six were in the 20-39 year age group, 19 in the 40-59 year age group, and 32 were ≥60 years; 37/57 (65%) were female. All except four were known to have underlying medical conditions.