

WEEKLY RESPIRATORY PATHOGENS SURVEILLANCE REPORT

 NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Division of the National Health Laboratory Service

SOUTH AFRICA WEEK 11 2021

CONTENTS

Surveillance programme description	2
Comments	3
Systematic Influenza-like illness (ILI) surveillance	4-7
Influenza	
Respiratory syncytial virus	
SARS-CoV-2	
Influenza-like illness (ILI) Viral Watch	8-10
Influenza	
SARS-CoV-2	
National syndromic surveillance for pneumonia	11-16
Influenza	
Respiratory syncytial virus	
SARS-CoV-2	
Summary of laboratory confirmed SARS-CoV-2 cases	17-18

HIGHLIGHTS: WEEK 11

- 2021 RSV season has not started yet.

- One influenza case, influenza A(H3N2), has been detected in week 9 of 2021 from pneumonia surveillance sentinel site in Western Cape but influenza season has not started.

- From 2 March 2020 to 21 March 2021, a total of 1192 COVID-19 cases were detected from all surveillance programmes. In the past week the number of positive cases continued to decrease in ILI surveillance. However there was a slight increase in number of positive cases reported in pneumonia surveillance in week 11 compared to the previous week. Of the 865 hospitalised COVID-19 cases reported with available data on outcome, 124 (14%) died.

CUMULATIVE DATA FROM



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

WEEK 11 2021

REPORTING PERIOD 4 JANUARY 2021 TO 21 MARCH 2021

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTIONS

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

***Started in November 2020

****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 11 2021

REPORTING PERIOD 2 MARCH 2020 TO 21 MARCH 2021

COMMENTS

Influenza

The influenza 2021 season has not started. The first influenza positive case of 2021 was detected in pneumonia surveillance in week 9 of 2021 (week ending on the 07 March 2021).

ILI programme: In 2021 to date, specimens from 373 patients were received from 4 ILI sites. Influenza was not detected. (Figure 1 and Table 1).

Viral Watch programme: During the same period, specimens were received from 30 patients from Viral Watch sites in three of the 8 provinces participating in surveillance. Influenza was not detected. (Figure 5 and Table 4).

Pneumonia surveillance: Since the beginning of 2021, specimens from 1073 patients with severe respiratory illness (SRI) were received from the 6 sentinel sites. Influenza A(H3N2) was detected in one (0.1%) patient. (Figure 9 and Table 7).

Respiratory syncytial virus

In 2021 to date, RSV transmission has been reported from all surveillance programmes, activity remains below seasonal threshold.

ILI programme: In 2021 to date, 373 specimens were tested and RSV was detected in specimens of 43 (12%) patients.

Viral Watch programme: During the same period, 30 specimens were tested and RSV was detected in specimens of four (13%) patients.

Pneumonia surveillance: Since the beginning of 2021, 1073 specimens were tested and RSV was detected in specimens of 146 (14%) 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: From March 2020 to date, specimens from 1683 patients were tested and SARS-CoV-2 was detected in 283 (17%) patients.

Viral Watch programme: From March 2020 to date, specimens were tested from 309 patients and SARS-CoV-2 was detected in 42 (14%) patients.

Pneumonia surveillance: From March 2020 to date, specimens from 4938 patients with severe respiratory illness (SRI) were tested and SARS-CoV-2 was detected in 867 (18%) patients.

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

WEEK 11 2021

REPORTING PERIOD 4 JANUARY 2021 TO 21 MARCH 2021

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

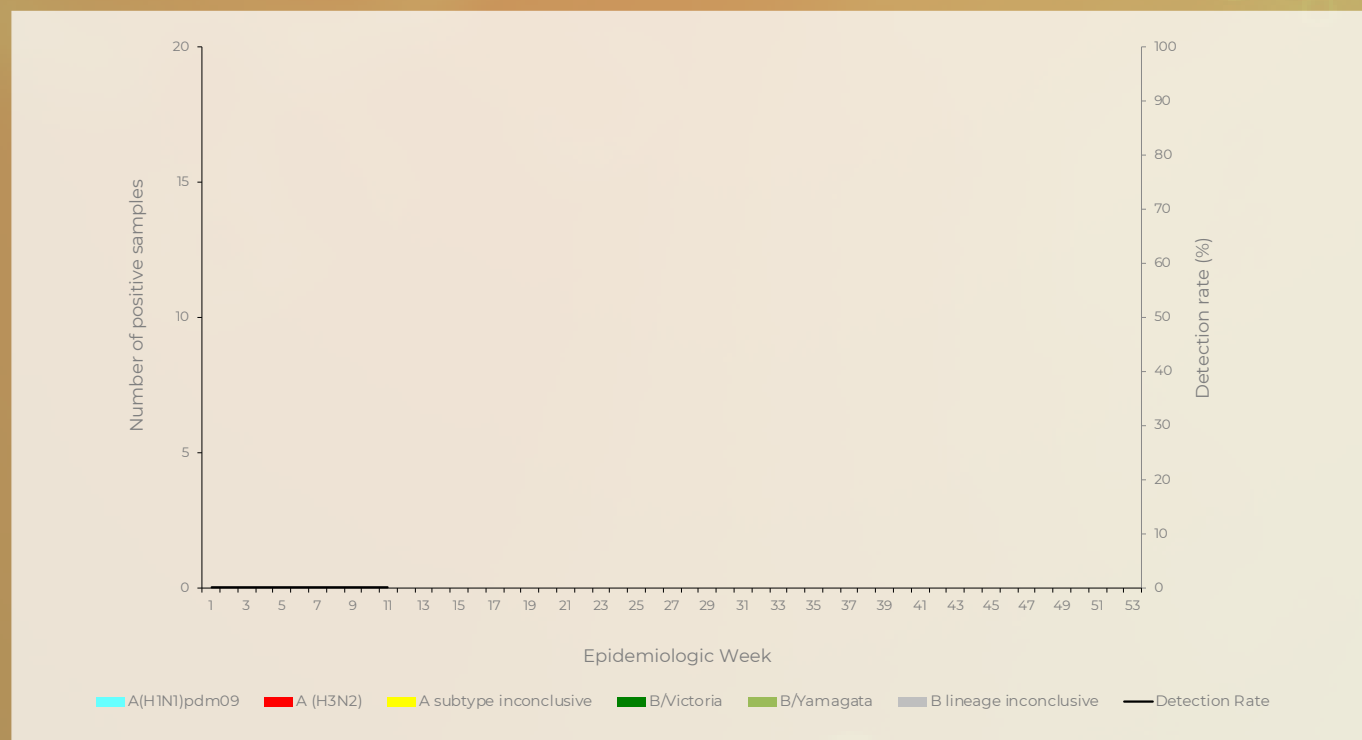


Figure 1. Number of positive samples* by influenza subtype and lineage and detection rate** by week

*Specimens from patients with influenza-like illnesses at 5 sentinel sites in 4 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
Agincourt (MP)	0	0	0	0	0	0	55
Eastridge (WC)	0	0	0	0	0	0	84
Edendale Gateway (KZ)	0	0	0	0	0	0	48
Jouberton (NW)	0	0	0	0	0	0	130
Mitchell's Plain (WC)	0	0	0	0	0	0	56
Total:	0	0	0	0	0	0	373

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

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

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

WEEK 11 2021

REPORTING PERIOD 4 JANUARY 2021 TO 21 MARCH 2021

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

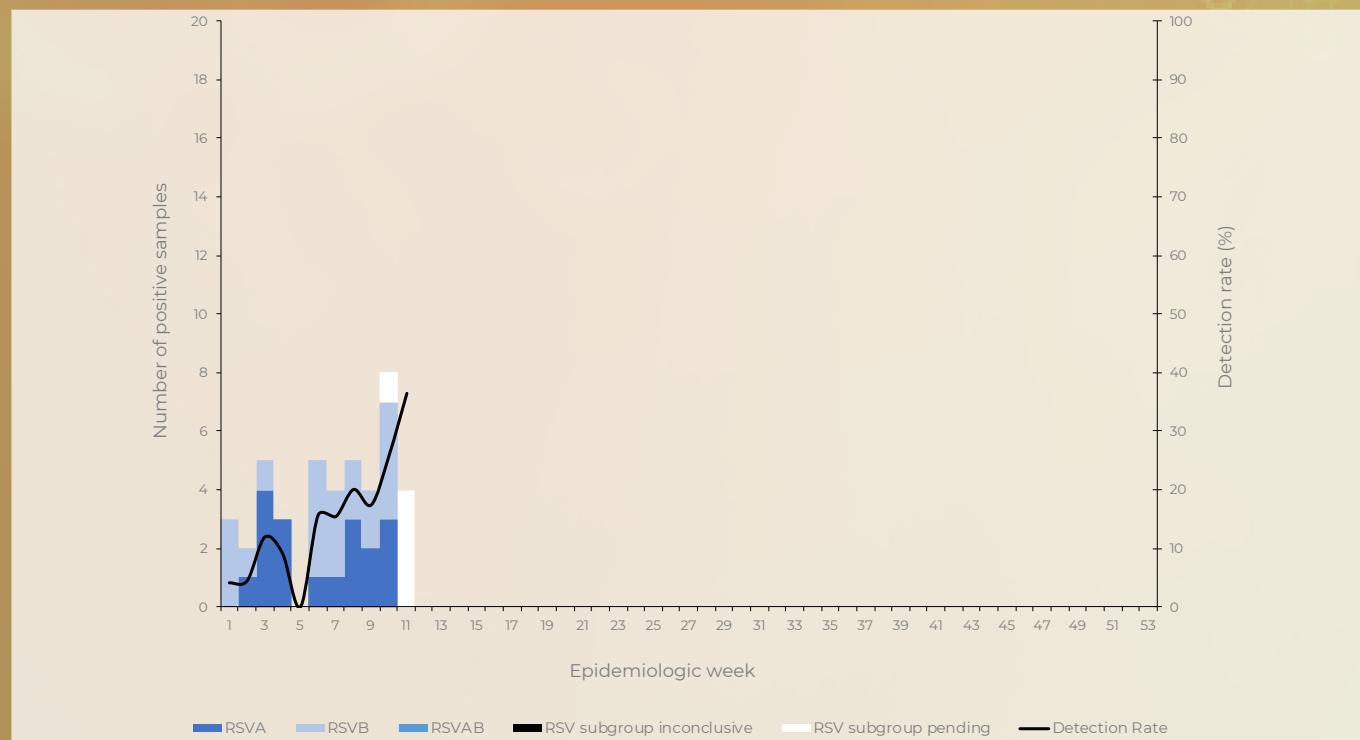


Figure 2. Number of samples testing positive for respiratory syncytial virus by subgroup and detection rate by week

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

RSV AB: Both RSV A and B subgroup identified

RSV subgroup pending: means RSV results for subgroups are pending

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	RSV subgroup pending*	Total samples
Agincourt (MP)	7	4	0	0	5	55
Eastridge (WC)	8	0	0	0	0	84
Edendale Gateway (KZ)	0	4	0	0	0	48
Jouberton (NW)	2	12	0	0	0	130
Mitchell's Plain (WC)	1	0	0	0	0	56
Total	18	20	0	0	5	373

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

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

RSV AB: Both RSV A and B subgroup identified

*RSV results for subgroups are pending

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

WEEK 11 2021

REPORTING PERIOD 4 JANUARY 2021 TO 21 MARCH 2021

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

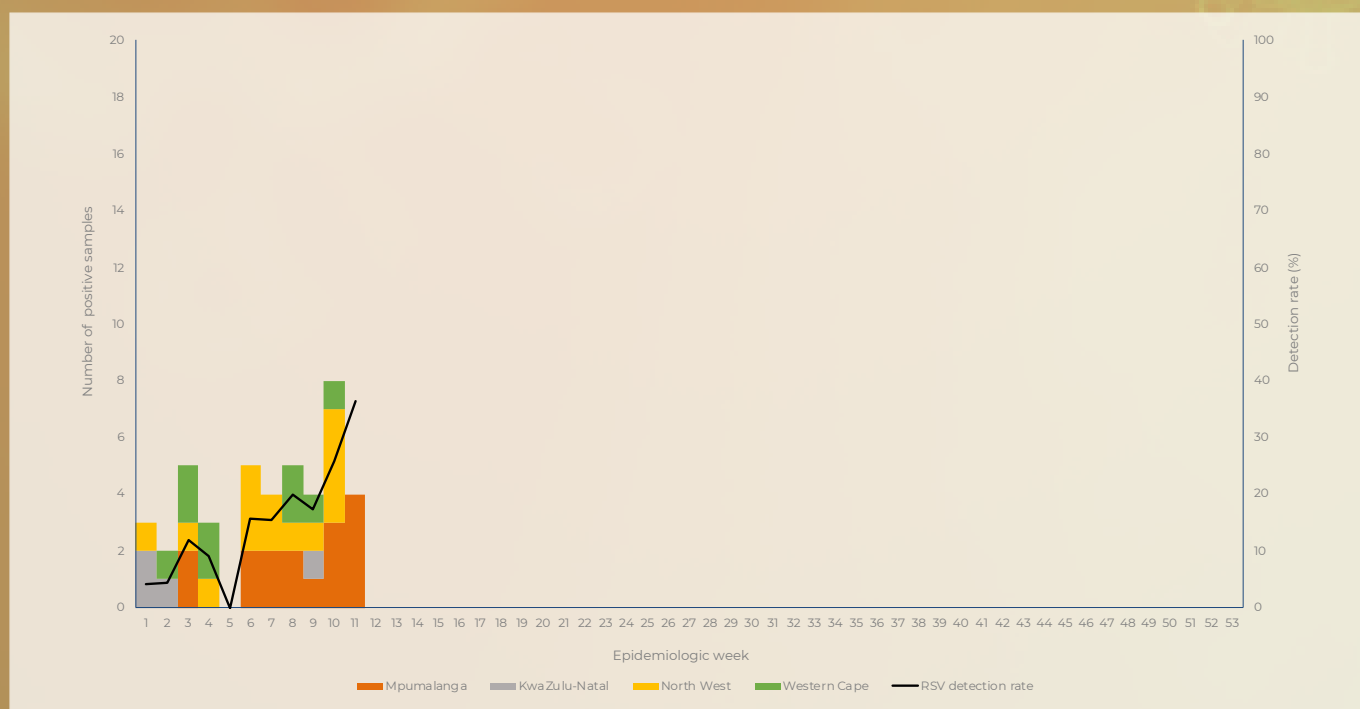


Figure 3. Number of samples testing positive for respiratory syncytial virus by province and detection rate by week

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

WEEK 11 2021

REPORTING PERIOD 2 MARCH 2020 TO 21 MARCH 2021

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

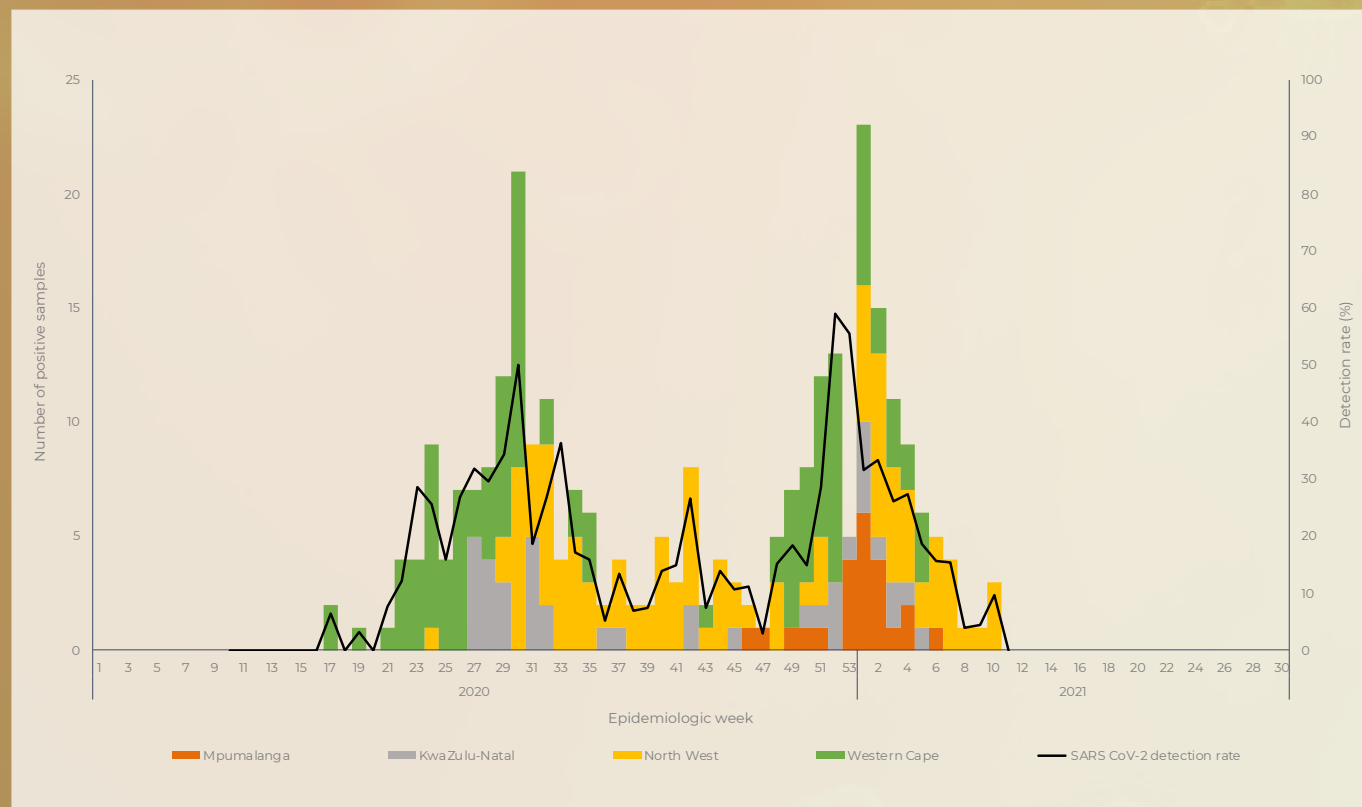


Figure 4. Number of samples testing positive for SARS-CoV-2* by province and detection rate by week

*Specimens from patients with influenza-like illnesses at 5 sentinel sites in 4 provinces (Mpumalanga started enrolling on the 10th November 2020)

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
Agincourt (MP)	23	85
Eastridge (WC)	47	572
Edendale Gateway (KZ)	39	189
Jouberton (NW)	109	452
Mitchell's Plain (WC)	65	385
Total:	283	1683

KZ: KwaZulu-Natal; NW: North West; WCP: Western Cape; MP: Mpumalanga (started enrolling on the 10th November 2020)

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

WEEK 11 2021

REPORTING PERIOD 4 JANUARY 2021 TO 21 MARCH 2021

INFLUENZA-LIKE ILLNESS (ILI) SURVEILLANCE VIRAL WATCH

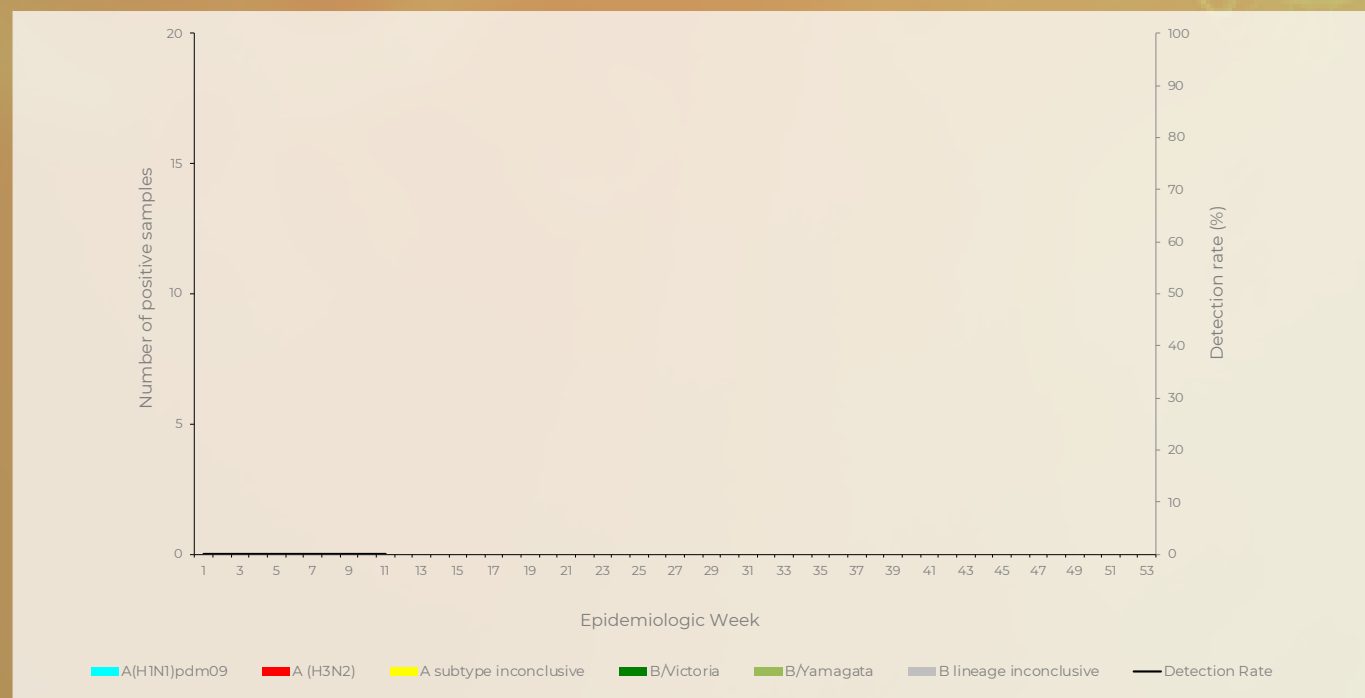


Figure 5. Number of positive samples* by influenza subtype and lineage and detection rate** by week

*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	0
Free State	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gauteng	0	0	0	0	0	0	27
Limpopo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mpumalanga	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
North West	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northern Cape	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Western Cape	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total:	0	0	0	0	0	0	30

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

From 04 January 2021 to date, no patients were tested for influenza at the time of entry into South Africa following travel abroad.

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 11 2021

REPORTING PERIOD 4 JANUARY 2021 TO 21 MARCH 2021

INFLUENZA-LIKE ILLNESS (ILI) SURVEILLANCE VIRAL WATCH

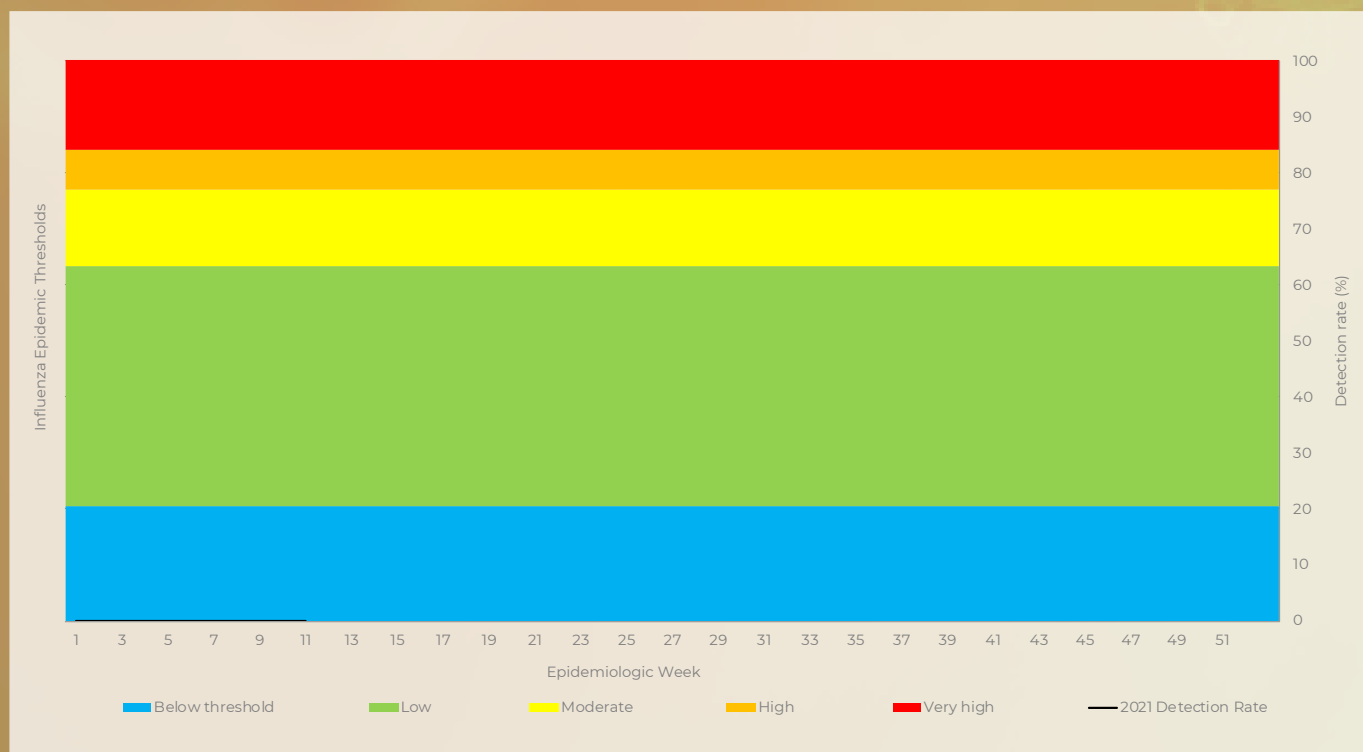


Figure 6. ILI surveillance (Viral Watch) percentage influenza detections and epidemic thresholds*

*Thresholds based on 2010-2019 data

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

WEEK 11 2021

REPORTING PERIOD 4 JANUARY 2021 TO 21 MARCH 2021

INFLUENZA-LIKE ILLNESS (ILI) SURVEILLANCE VIRAL WATCH

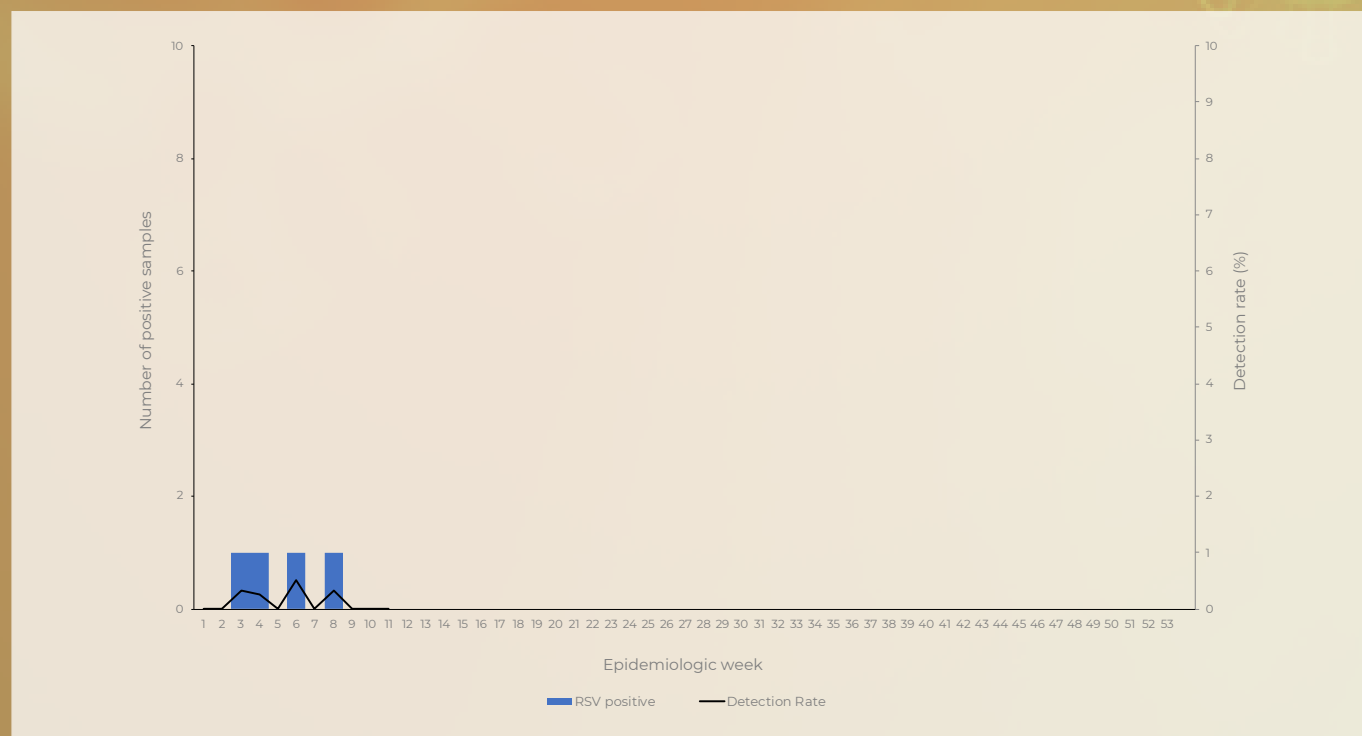


Figure 7. Number of samples testing positive for RSV*, and detection rate by week

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

Table 5. Cumulative number of RSV positive cases identified and total number of samples tested by province

Province	RSV positive	Total samples tested
Eastern Cape	0	0
Free State	0	0
Gauteng	4	27
Limpopo	0	0
Mpumalanga	0	1
North West	0	0
Northern Cape	0	0
Western Cape	0	2
Total:	4	30

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

WEEK 11 2021

REPORTING PERIOD 2 MARCH 2020 TO 21 MARCH 2021

INFLUENZA-LIKE ILLNESS (ILI) SURVEILLANCE VIRAL WATCH

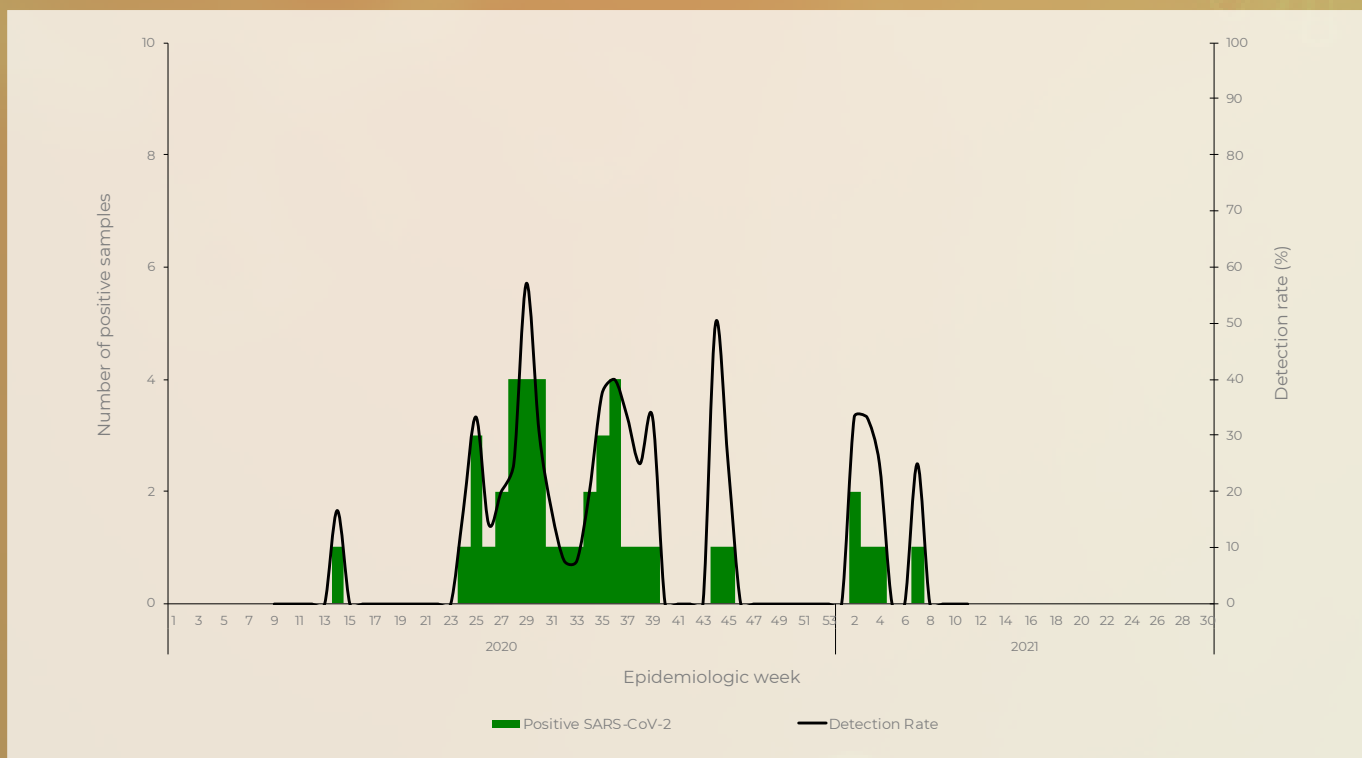


Figure 8. Number of samples testing positive for SARS-CoV-2*, and detection rate by week

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

Table 6. Cumulative number of SARS-CoV-2 identified and total number of samples tested by province

Hospital (Province)	SARS-CoV-2 positive	Total samples
Eastern Cape	1	4
Free State	1	14
Gauteng	30	187
Limpopo	0	2
Mpumalanga	1	6
North West	0	0
Northern Cape	0	2
Western Cape	9	94
Total:	42	309

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

WEEK 11 2021

REPORTING PERIOD 4 JANUARY 2021 TO 21 MARCH 2021

NATIONAL SYNDROMIC SURVEILLANCE FOR PNEUMONIA

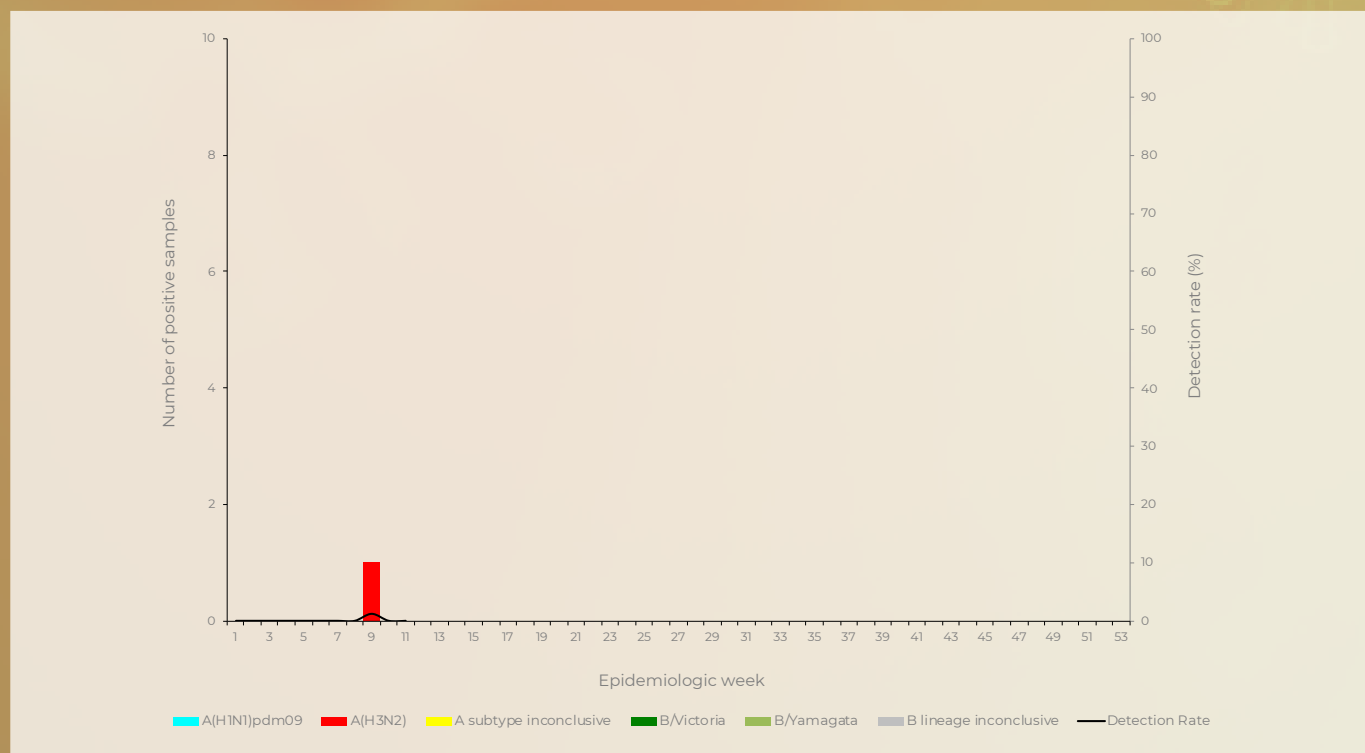


Figure 9. Number of positive samples* by influenza subtype and lineage and detection rate** by week

*Specimens from patients hospitalised with pneumonia at 7 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 7. Cumulative number of identified influenza subtype and lineage and total number of samples tested by 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	144
Helen Joseph-Rahima Moosa (GP)	0	0	0	0	0	0	308
Klerksdorp-Tshepong (NW)	0	0	0	0	0	0	153
Mapulaneng-Matikwana (MP)	0	0	0	0	0	0	167
Red Cross (WC)	0	0	0	0	0	0	149
Mitchell's Plain (WC)	0	1	0	0	0	0	123
Tintswalo (MP)	0	0	0	0	0	0	29
Total:	0	1	0	0	0	0	1073

GP: Gauteng; KZ: KwaZulu-Natal; NW: North West; MP: Mpumalanga (Tintswalo started enrolling on the 10th Feb 2021); 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 11 2021

REPORTING PERIOD 4 JANUARY 2021 TO 21 MARCH 2021

NATIONAL SYNDROMIC SURVEILLANCE FOR PNEUMONIA

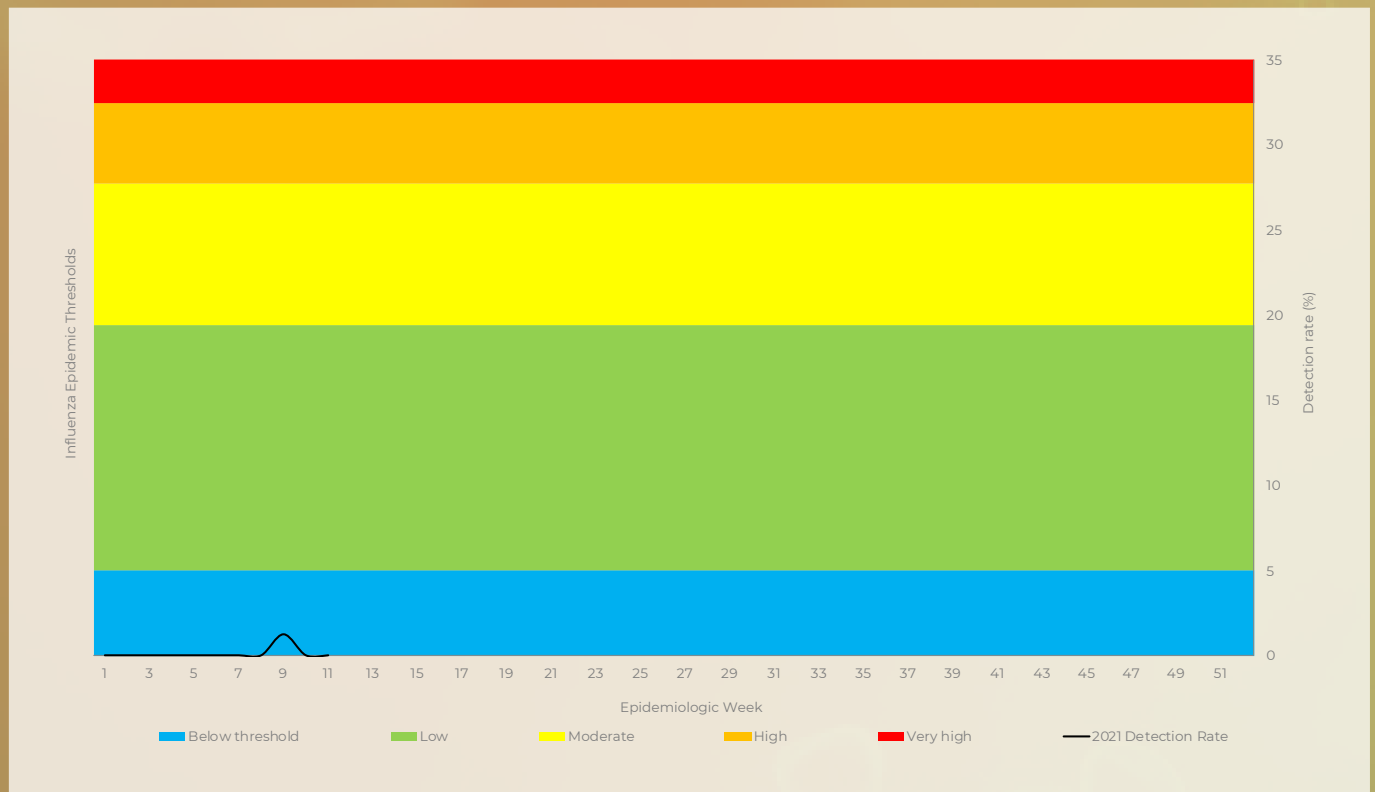


Figure 10. National syndromic surveillance for pneumonia percentage influenza detections and epidemic thresholds*

*Thresholds based on 2010-2019 data

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

WEEK 11 2021

REPORTING PERIOD 4 JANUARY 2021 TO 21 MARCH 2021

NATIONAL SYNDROMIC SURVEILLANCE FOR PNEUMONIA

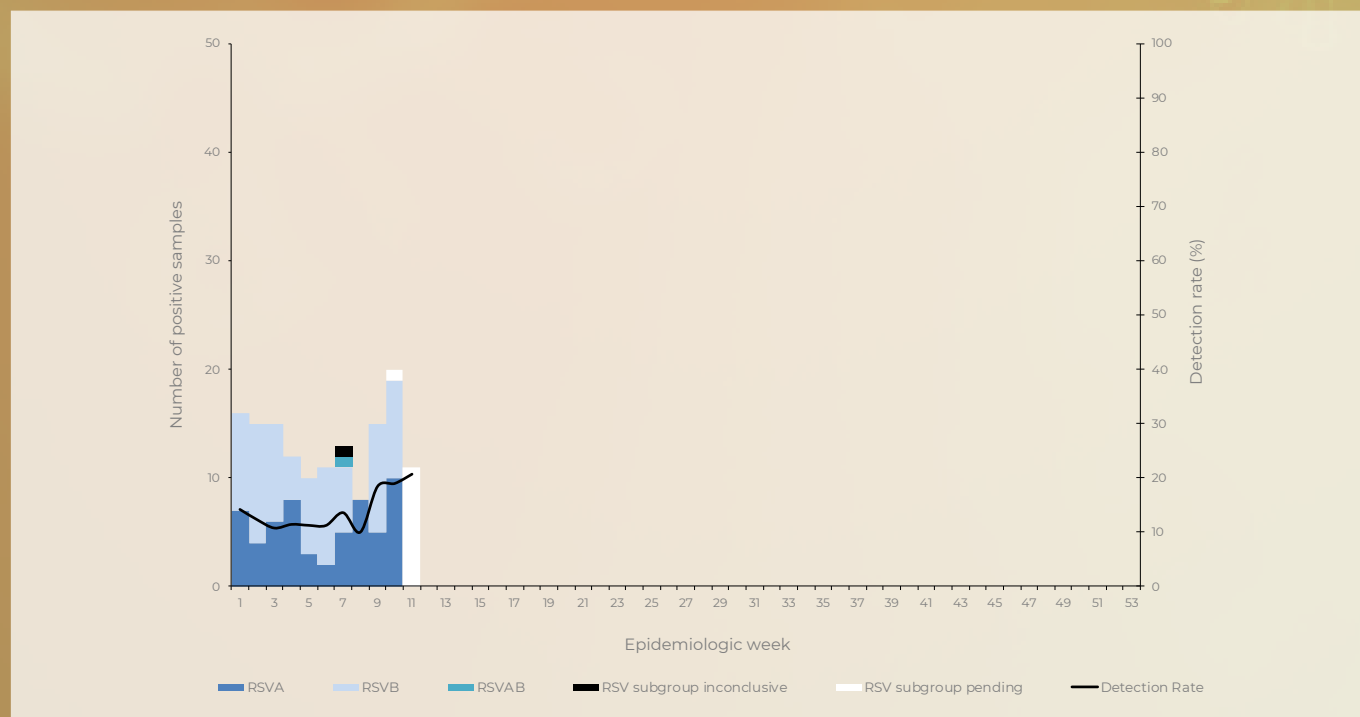


Figure 11. Number of samples testing positive for respiratory syncytial virus by subgroup and detection rate by week

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

RSV AB: Both RSV A and B subgroup identified

RSV subgroup pending: means RSV results for subgroups are pending

Table 8: Cumulative number of respiratory syncytial virus subgroups identified and total number of samples tested by hospital

Hospital (Province)	RSVA	RSVB	RSVAB	RSV subgroup inconclusive	RSV subgroup pending*	Total samples
Edendale (KZ)	3	16	0	0	0	144
Helen Joseph-Rahima Moosa (GP)	21	24	0	0	4	308
Klerksdorp-Tshepong (NW)	5	26	0	1	3	153
Mapulaneng-Matikwana (MP)	5	4	1	0	4	167
Red Cross (WC)	16	2	0	0	0	149
Mitchell's Plain (WC)	3	2	0	0	0	123
Tintswalo (MP)	5	0	0	0	1	29
Total:	58	74	1	1	12	1073

GP: Gauteng; KZ: KwaZulu-Natal; NW: North West; MP: Mpumalanga (Tintswalo started enrolling on the 10th Feb 2021); WC: Western Cape

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

RSV AB: Both RSV A and B subgroup identified

*RSV results for subgroups are pending

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

WEEK 11 2021

REPORTING PERIOD 4 JANUARY 2021 TO 21 MARCH 2021

NATIONAL SYNDROMIC SURVEILLANCE FOR PNEUMONIA



Figure 12. Number of samples testing positive for respiratory syncytial virus by province and detection rate by week

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

WEEK 11 2021

REPORTING PERIOD 2 MARCH 2020 TO 21 MARCH 2021

NATIONAL SYNDROMIC SURVEILLANCE FOR PNEUMONIA

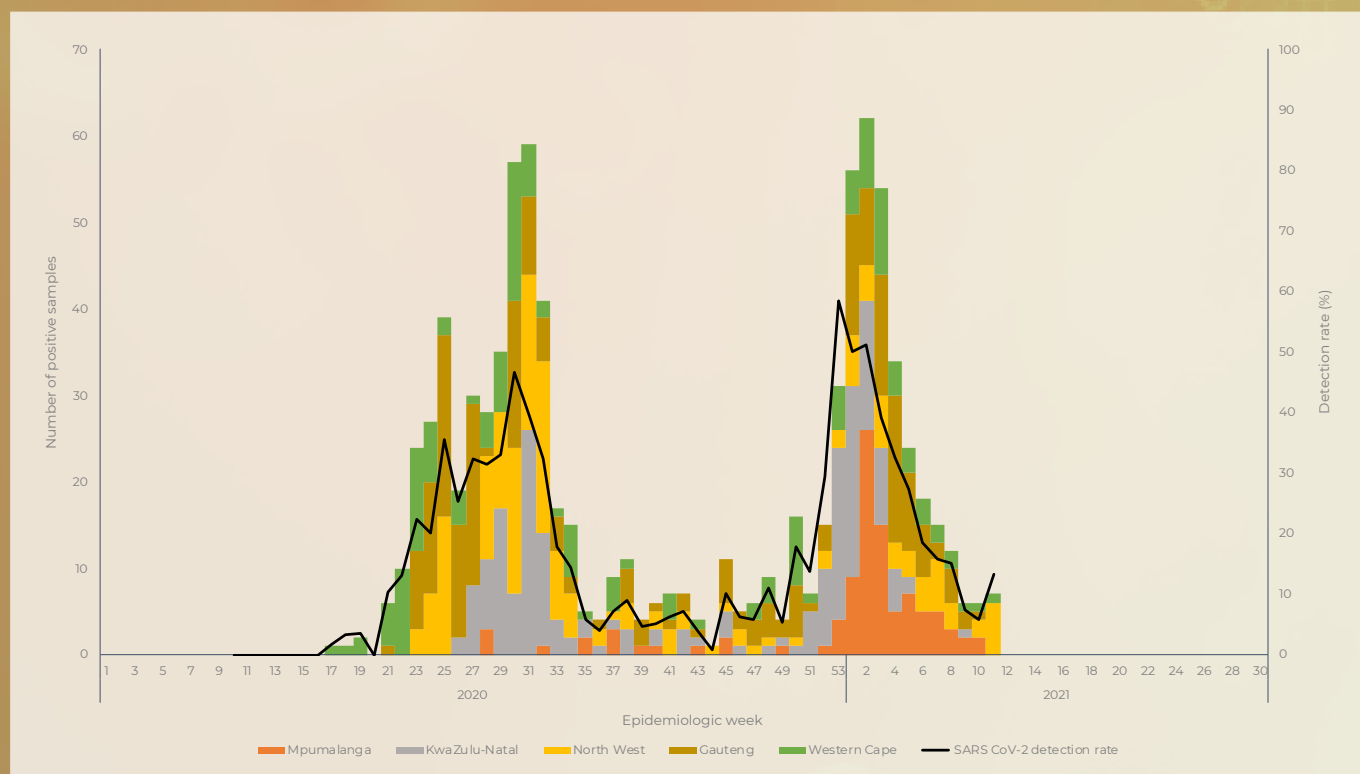


Figure 13. Number of samples testing positive for SARS-CoV-2* by province and detection rate by week

*Specimens from patients hospitalised with pneumonia at 7 sentinel sites in 5 provinces

Table 9. 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)	195	843
Helen Joseph-Rahima Moosa (GP)	233	1147
Klerksdorp-Tshepong (NW)	184	746
Mapulaneng-Matikwana (MP)	92	467
Red Cross (WC)	42	1106
Mitchell's Plain (WC)	114	590
Tintswalo (MP)	7	29
Total:	867	4928

GP: Gauteng; KZ: KwaZulu-Natal; NW: North West; MP: Mpumalanga (Tintswalo started enrolling on the 10th Feb 2021); WC: Western Cape

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

WEEK 11 2021

REPORTING PERIOD 2 MARCH 2020 TO 21 MARCH 2021

SUMMARY OF LABORATORY CONFIRMED SARS-COV-2 CASES

Table 10. Characteristics of laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19, enrolled in influenza-like illness (ILI) and pneumonia surveillance programmes, South Africa, 02 March 2020 – 21 March 2021

Characteristic	Influenza-like illness (ILI), public-sector, n=283 (%)	Pneumonia, n=867 (%)
Age group		
0-9	32/283 (11)	62/867 (7)
10-19	19/283 (7)	6/867 (1)
20-39	125/283 (44)	156/867 (18)
40-59	84/283 (29)	323/867 (37)
60-79	22/283 (8)	293/867 (34)
≥80	1/283 (<1)	26/867 (3)
Sex-female	160/283 (57)	529/867 (61)
Province*		
Gauteng	N/A	233/867 (27)
KwaZulu-Natal	39/283 (14)	195/867 (23)
Mpumalanga**	23/283 (8)	99/867 (11)
North West	109/283 (38)	184/867 (21)
Western Cape	112/283 (40)	156/867 (18)
Race		
Black	191/282 (67)	723/865 (83)
Coloured	90/282 (32)	106/865 (12)
Asian/Indian	0/282 (0)	22/865 (3)
Other	2/282 (1)	14/865 (2)
Presentation		
Fever	274/283 (97)	476/865 (56)
Cough	282/283 (99)	836/865 (97)
Shortness of breath	87/283 (31)	701/865 (81)
Chest pain	115/283 (41)	385/865 (45)
Diarrhoea	26/283 (9)	56/865 (6)

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

WEEK 11 2021

REPORTING PERIOD 2 MARCH 2020 TO 21 MARCH 2021

Characteristic	Influenza-like illness (ILI), public-sector, n=283 (%)	Pneumonia, n=867 (%)
Underlying conditions		
Hypertension	12/283 (4)	123/865 (14)
Cardiac	0/283 (0)	8/865 (1)
Lung disease	0/283 (0)	1/865 (<1)
Diabetes	6/283 (2)	186/865 (22)
Cancer	0/283 (0)	5/865 (1)
Tuberculosis	1/283 (<1)	24/865 (3)
HIV-infection	39/283 (14)	179/865 (21)
Other ***	8/283 (3)	80/865 (9)
Management		
Oxygen therapy	2/283 (1)	632/865 (73)
ICU admission	N/A	22/865 (3)
Ventilation	N/A	25/865 (3)
Outcome***		
Died	0/283 (0)	124/865 (14)

*ILI surveillance not conducted in Gauteng province

**Mpumalanga (ILI site started enrolling on the 10th November 2020 and an additional SARI site started enrolling on the 10th February 2021)

***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 124 patients who died, 11 were in the 20-39 year age group, 37 in the 40-59 year age group, and 76 were ≥60 years; 78/124 (63%) were female. All except six were known to have underlying medical conditions.