

COVID-19 WEEKLY EPIDEMIOLOGY BRIEF

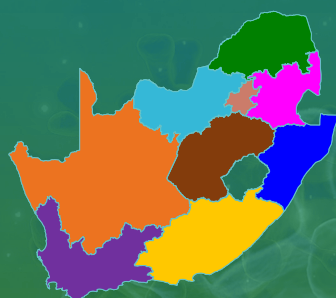


NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR
COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Division of the National Health Laboratory Service

SOUTH AFRICA WEEK 16 2021

CUMULATIVE DATA FROM



CASES

1 575 471
IN TOTAL

7 655
THIS WEEK**

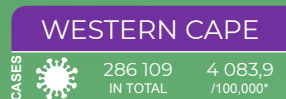


PERSONS

2 642,4
INCIDENCE RISK*

40
MEDIAN AGE

PROVINCES AT A GLANCE



* Incidence risk - cases per 100 000 persons
** based on samples collected/received in current reporting week

SUMMARY

Overview of report

Disease surveillance is a core function of the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD), a division of the National Health Laboratory Service (NHLS). This report summarises data from a national laboratory-based surveillance system that is used to monitor the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic in South Africa. This report is based on data collected up to 24 April 2021 (week 16 of 2021). Note: COVID-19 is the name of the disease and SARS-CoV-2 is the name of the virus. Trends in numbers of new cases by province and age group may be affected by changes in testing practice and delays in testing of specimens. The numbers reported may change as more data become available.

Highlights

- As of 24 April 2021, a total of 1 575 471 laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases had been detected in South Africa. Of these, 8 702 were cases reported since the last report (week 15 of 2021). There was an 8.6% decrease in the number of new cases detected in week 16 of 2021 (7 655) compared to the number of new cases detected in week 15 of 2021 (8 379).
- An additional 412 deaths were reported since the last report. The overall case-fatality ratio is 3.4% (54 148/1 575 471).
- In the past week, the Gauteng Province reported the highest proportion of the new cases detected (2 021/7 655, 26.4%), followed by the Free State Province (1 436/7 655, 18.8%), and the Northern Cape Province (1 126/7 655, 14.7%).
- In the past week, three provinces reported a slight increase in weekly incidence risk, the Limpopo Province (0.4 cases per 100 000 persons, 14.5% increase), the Free State Province (0.8 cases per 100 000 persons, 1.7% increase), and the Northern Cape Province (9.4 cases per 100 000 persons, 12.0% increase), other provinces reported a decrease in weekly incidence risk, compared to the previous week. Some of the reduction in the past week in weekly incidence risk maybe be due to delays in reporting.
- In the past week, the Northern Cape Province reported the highest weekly incidence risk (87.1 cases per 100 000 persons), followed by the Free State Province (49.0 cases per 100 000 persons), and the North West Province (22.2 cases per 100 000 persons).

INCIDENCE
RISK FOR
CURRENT WEEK

12,8
CASES PER
100 000
PERSONS

26,4%
OF CASES
REPORTED IN
GAUTENG IN
CURRENT WEEK

IN CURRENT
WEEK, THE
HIGHEST
WEEKLY
INCIDENCE RISK
WAS IN CASES
AGED 60-64
YEARS (27,1
CASES PER 100
000 PERSONS)

Methods

Testing for SARS-CoV-2 began on 28 January 2020 at the NICD and after the first case was confirmed in early March 2020, testing was expanded to a larger network of private and NHLS laboratories. Respiratory specimens were submitted from persons under investigation (PUI). Initially, tested individuals were those who had travelled to countries with COVID-19 transmission but the PUI definition was changed over time. Community symptom screening and referral for PCR testing was implemented in April 2020 but the strategy was changed to a more targeted approach in May 2020. Community screening was largely discontinued and testing efforts then focussed on areas identified as hot spots and on investigating clusters. Contacts of cases were traced and tested if symptomatic. In some provinces and in certain circumstances (e.g. closed settings, workplaces), asymptomatic contacts were tested. In recent weeks, testing has been prioritised for healthcare workers and hospitalised patients. Laboratories used any one of several in-house and commercial PCR assays to test for the presence of SARS-CoV-2 RNA. Testing for SARS-CoV-2 using rapid antigen-based tests was implemented during November 2020. We excluded specimens collected outside South Africa. Date of specimen receipt in the laboratory was used when date of specimen collection was missing. A case of COVID-19 was defined as any person, resident in South Africa, with a single positive SARS-CoV-2 PCR or antigen test. For reports published from week 41 of 2020 onwards we used mid-year population estimates from Statistics South Africa for 2020 to calculate the incidence risk (cumulative or weekly incidence), expressed as cases per 100 000 persons. In historical reports published from epidemiologic week 10 (during the start of COVID-19 epidemic in South Africa) to week 40 of 2020, 2019 mid-year population estimates were used. Aggregate data on the number of deaths by province were obtained from the Department of Health. Data on number of tests conducted in the past week as reported in the simultaneously-published COVID-19 weekly testing report was used to calculate tests conducted per 100 000 population. Data on province and district allocation was based on geocoding algorithm using in order of priority (i) completeness of patient data, (ii) submitting doctor's address, (iii) registering doctor's address and as final option, (iv) the guarantor's address data. The geocoding algorithm used the most complete data for assigning data on province and district where adequate information was provided on the lab request form at the time of sample collection. Data on district allocation may lag resulting in number of cases in recent weeks missing district allocation. Prevalence and incidence risk by districts should be interpreted with caution.

We estimated the time-varying (weekly) doubling time of the COVID-19 epidemic for the provinces with sufficient data and from weeks with sufficient number of cases and complete data (week 12 to the week before the current reporting period). The unit of analysis (epidemiological week) was defined from Sunday to the following Saturday. We first estimated the weekly growth rate of the epidemic by fitting a linear regression model to the logarithm of the daily cumulative number of laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases. We then estimated the doubling time for each week using the following formula $\log(2)/gr$ (where gr is the estimated weekly growth rate). An increase in the doubling time may suggest a slowing of transmission but this may also be affected by changes in testing strategy or care seeking. Until the week 29 report, new cases were defined as all cases reported since the last report, irrespective of when the sample was collected. Subsequent to the week 29 of 2020 report, new cases are now defined as cases detected in the past epidemiologic week based on date of sample collection or sample receipt. It is therefore possible for numbers reported as new cases for the current reporting week not to tally with total additional cases reported since the last report. This will be the case when there was a delay in reporting of cases.

National and provincial trends of COVID-19 cases in South Africa

As of 24 April 2021, a total of 1 575 471 laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases were reported in South Africa (Figures 1 and 2). This is 8 702 more cases than the number reported in the last report (week 15 of 2021 report). The number of new cases detected in week 16 of 2021 (7 655) was lower than the number of new cases detected in week 15 of 2021 (8 379), this represented an 8.6% decrease in the number of new cases compared to the previous week. In the past week, the Gauteng Province reported the highest number of new cases (2 021/7 655, 26.4%), followed by the Free State Province (1 436/7 655, 18.8%), and the Northern Cape Province (1 126/7 655, 14.7%) (Table 1). Five provinces, Gauteng (421 880/1 575 471, 26.8%), KwaZulu-Natal (336 297/1 575 471, 21.3%), Western Cape (286 109/1 575 471, 18.2%), Eastern Cape (195 979/1 575 471, 12.4%), and Free State (87 568/1 575 471, 5.6%) continued to report the majority (1 327 833/1 575 471, 84.3%) of total COVID-19 cases in South Africa. In keeping with the data reported in the previous weeks, there was minimal change in percent contribution of cases in the different provinces from week 15 to week 16 of 2021.

The cumulative incidence risk for the country increased from 2 629.6 cases per 100 000 persons in week 15 of 2021 to 2 642.4 cases per 100 000 persons in week 16 of 2021. The cumulative incidence risk varied by province over time (Figure 3). This is partly explained by testing differences by province (Table 1). The Western Cape Province reported the highest cumulative incidence risk (4 083.9 cases per

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100 000 persons), followed by the Northern Cape Province (3 036.5 cases per 100 000 persons), the Free State Province (2 989.8 cases per 100 000 persons), the KwaZulu-Natal Province (2 916.3 cases per 100 000 persons), the Eastern Cape Province (2 910.3 cases per 100 000 persons), and the Gauteng Province (2 723.9 cases per 100 000 persons). In the last week, the Northern Cape Province replaced Free State as the province with the second highest cumulative incidence risk. The other provinces continued to report cumulative incidence risk below 2 000 cases per 100 000 persons, with Limpopo Province reporting the lowest cumulative incidence risk (1 089.8 cases per 100 000 persons).

Similar to the past nine weeks, the Northern Cape Province reported the highest weekly incidence risk (87.1 cases per 100 000 persons) in week 16 of 2021, followed by the Free State Province (49.0 cases per 100 000 persons), and the North West Province (22.2 cases per 100 000 persons). In the past week, three provinces reported a slight increase in weekly incidence risk, Limpopo Province (0.4 cases per 100 000 persons, 14.5% increase), the Free State Province (0.8 cases per 100 000 persons, 1.7% increase), and the Northern Cape Province (9.4 cases per 100 000 persons, 12.0% increase), other provinces reported a decrease in weekly incidence risk, compared to the previous week. The decrease in weekly incidence risk ranged from 0.6 cases per 100 000 persons (26.2% decrease) in the Eastern Cape Province to 4.5 cases per 100 000 persons (27.0% decrease) in Mpumalanga Province (Figure 4). Some of the reductions in week 16 of 2021 weekly incidence

risk could be as a result of reporting delays.

Among the five provinces reporting the majority of cases in South Africa to date, doubling time of number of cases varied with time. In week 15 of 2021, the estimated doubling time of number of cases decreased in all provinces, except the Eastern Cape Province which reported an increase (from 4 319.0 days to 5 162.6 days, 19.5% increase) in the estimated doubling time. The estimated doubling time decreased in the KwaZulu-Natal Province (from 2 522.4 days to 2 487.9 days, 1.4% decrease), the Western Cape Province (from 1 315.4 days to 1 245.8 days, 5.3% decrease), the Gauteng Province (from 864.0 days to 786.5 days, 9.0% decrease), and the Free State Province (from 355.5 days to 259.6 days, 27.0% decrease) (Figure 5).

The case-fatality ratio (CFR) was 3.4% (54 148/1 575 471); an additional 412 deaths were reported since the last report. The number of deaths reported in the past week was lower than the number reported in the previous week, 412 deaths compared to 414 deaths. A CFR calculated in this way (number of deaths/number of diagnosed cases) is subject to numerous limitations. Because deaths are delayed in relation to cases, as case numbers decrease rapidly, the crude CFR may increase as a result of a more rapid reduction in the denominator compared to the numerator. The CFR may be an underestimate as deaths in hospital are more likely to be reported than deaths out of hospital. In addition, occurrence and reporting of deaths may be delayed to several weeks after case diagnoses.

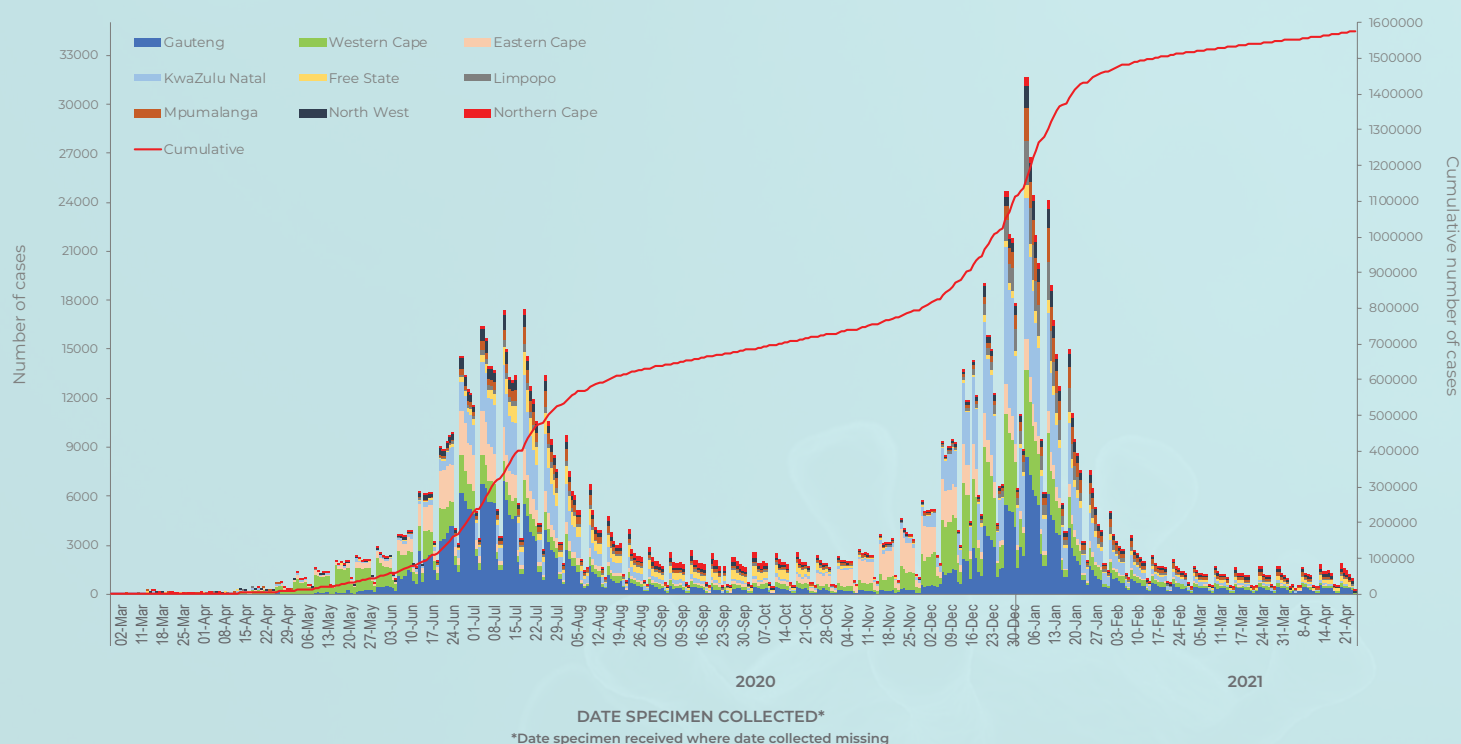


Figure 1. Number and cumulative number of laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 by province and date of specimen collection, South Africa, 3 March 2020 –24 April 2021 (n=1 575 471)

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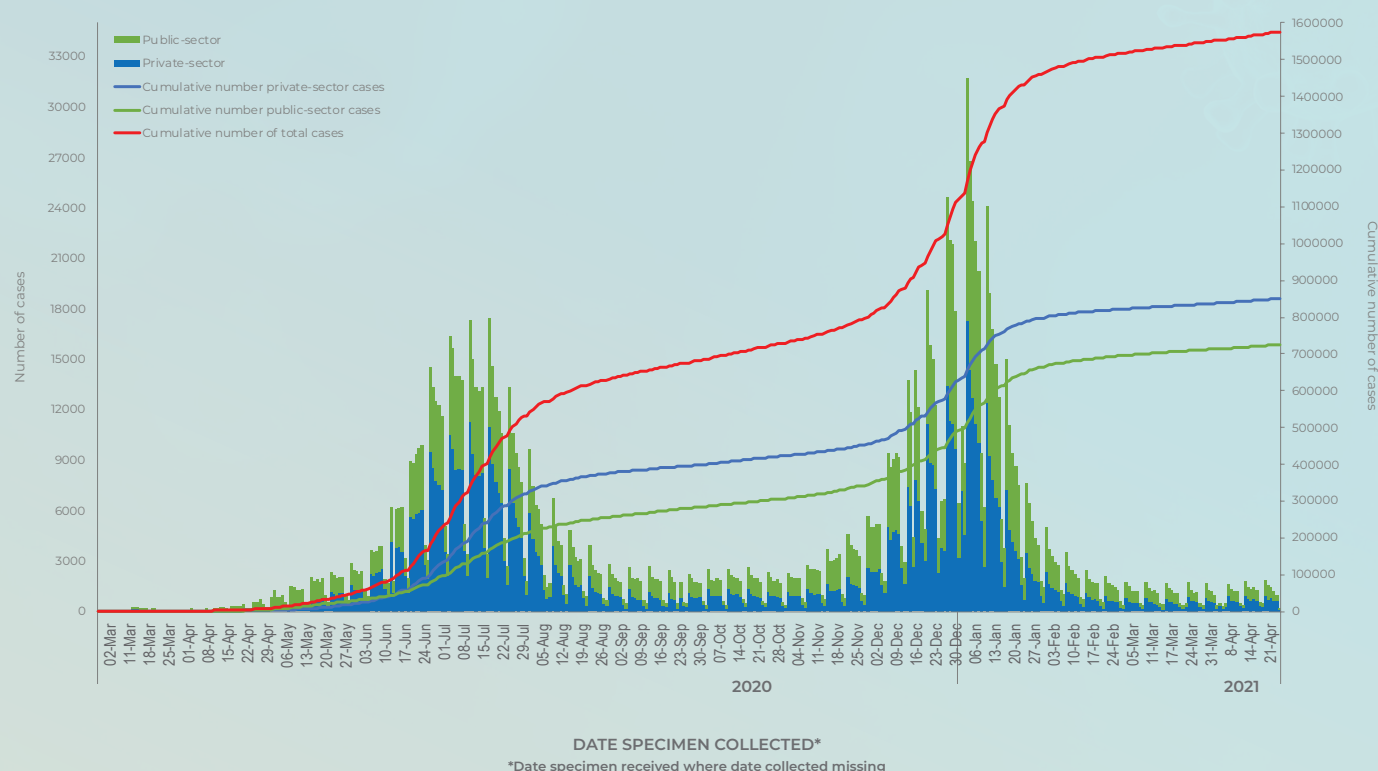


Figure 2. Number and cumulative number of laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19, by testing laboratory sector and date of specimen collection, South Africa, 3 March 2020 –24 April 2021 (n=1 575 471)

Table 1. Number and cumulative/weekly incidence risk of laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 and testing per 100 000 persons by province, South Africa, 3 March 2020 –24 April 2021 (n=1 575 471)

Province	Cumulative cases (n) (percentage, n/ total cases in South Africa)	New cases ¹ detected in week 16 (18-24 Apr 2021), n (percentage ² , n/total)	Population in mid-2020 ³ , n	Cumulative incidence risk (cases per 100 000 persons)	Incidence risk of new cases detected in week 16 of 2021 (cases/100 000 persons)	Tests ⁴ per 100 000 persons, 18-24 Apr 2021
Eastern Cape	195 979 (12.4)	121 (1.6)	6 734 001	2 910.3	1.8	151.6
Free State	87 568 (5.6)	1 436 (18.8)	2 928 903	2 989.8	49.0	407.0
Gauteng	421 880 (26.8)	2 021 (26.4)	15 488 137	2 723.9	13.0	375.8
KwaZulu-Natal	336 297 (21.3)	487 (6.4)	11 531 628	2 916.3	4.2	268.1
Limpopo	63 784 (4.0)	174 (2.3)	5 852 553	1 089.8	3.0	70.9
Mpumalanga	77 706 (4.9)	564 (7.4)	4 679 786	1 660.5	12.1	193.6
North West	66 893 (4.2)	914 (11.9)	4 108 816	1 628.0	22.2	235.0
Northern Cape	39 255 (2.5)	1 126 (14.7)	1 292 786	3 036.5	87.1	600.3
Western Cape	286 109 (18.2)	812 (10.6)	7 005 741	4 083.9	11.6	400.7
Unknown						
Total	1 575 471	7 655	59 622 350	2 642.4	12.8	285.0

¹New cases refer to cases whose samples were collected or received in the current reporting week; ²Percentage=n/total number of new cases (specimen collected or received in current reporting week); ³2020 Mid-year population Statistics South Africa ⁴Data on number of tests conducted sourced from COVID-19 weekly testing report of the same reporting week

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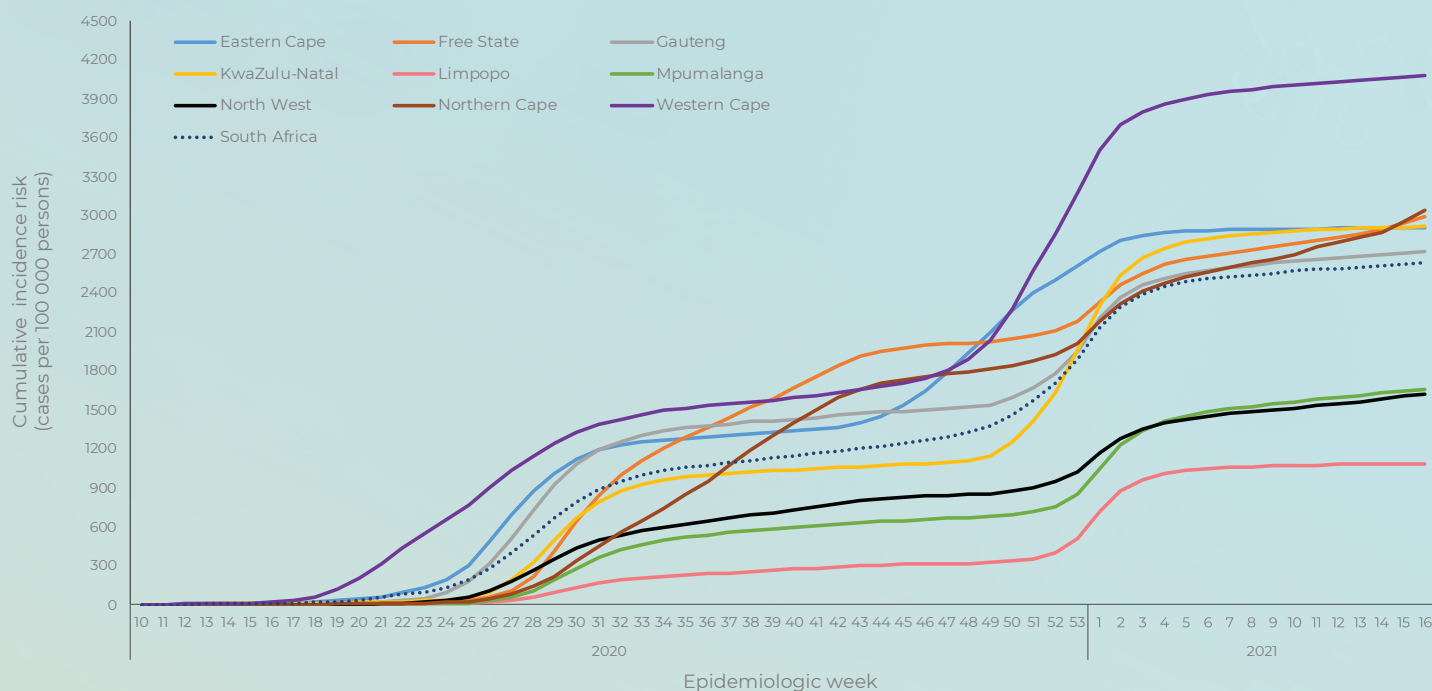


Figure 3. Cumulative incidence risk of laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 by province and epidemiologic week, South Africa, 3 March 2020 –24 April 2021 (n= 1 575 471)

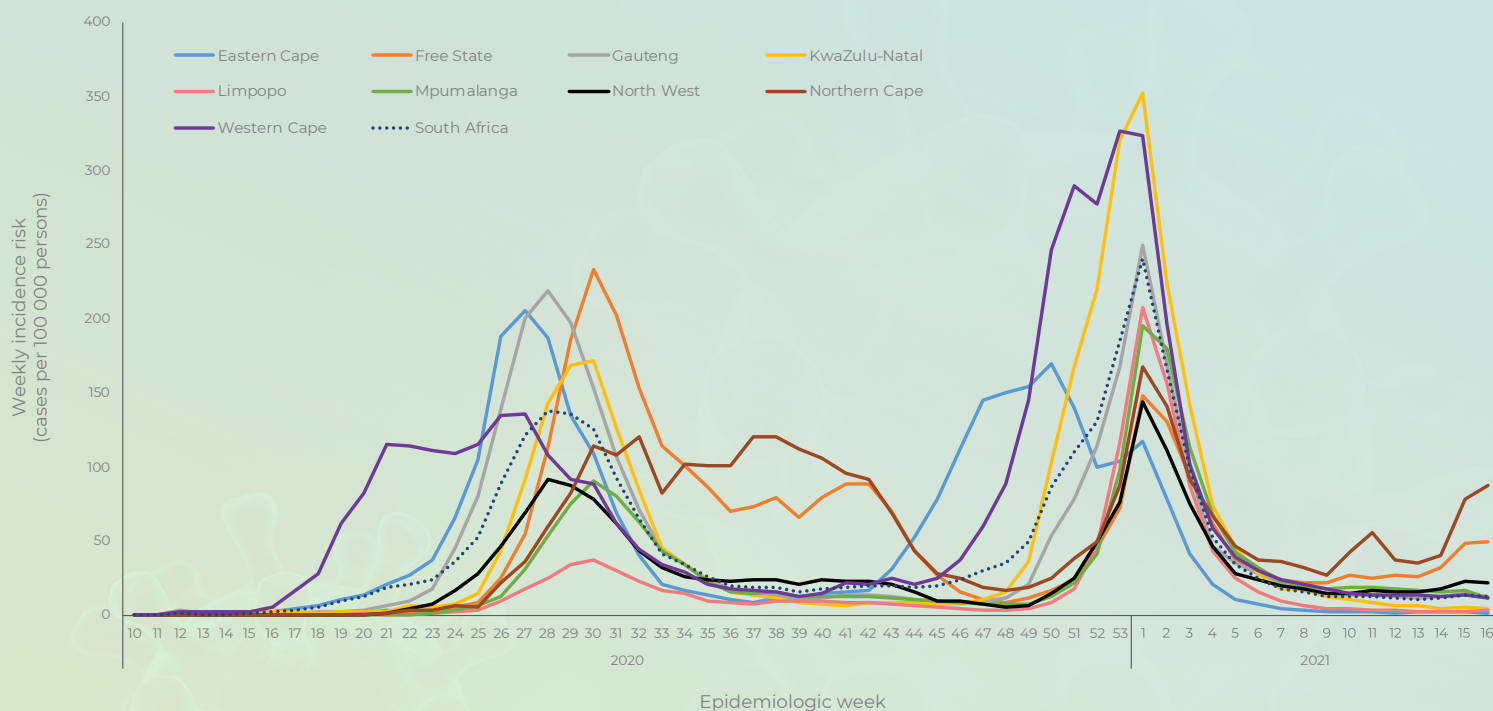


Figure 4. Weekly incidence risk of laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 by province and epidemiologic week, South Africa, 3 March 2020 –24 April 2021 (n= 1 575 471)

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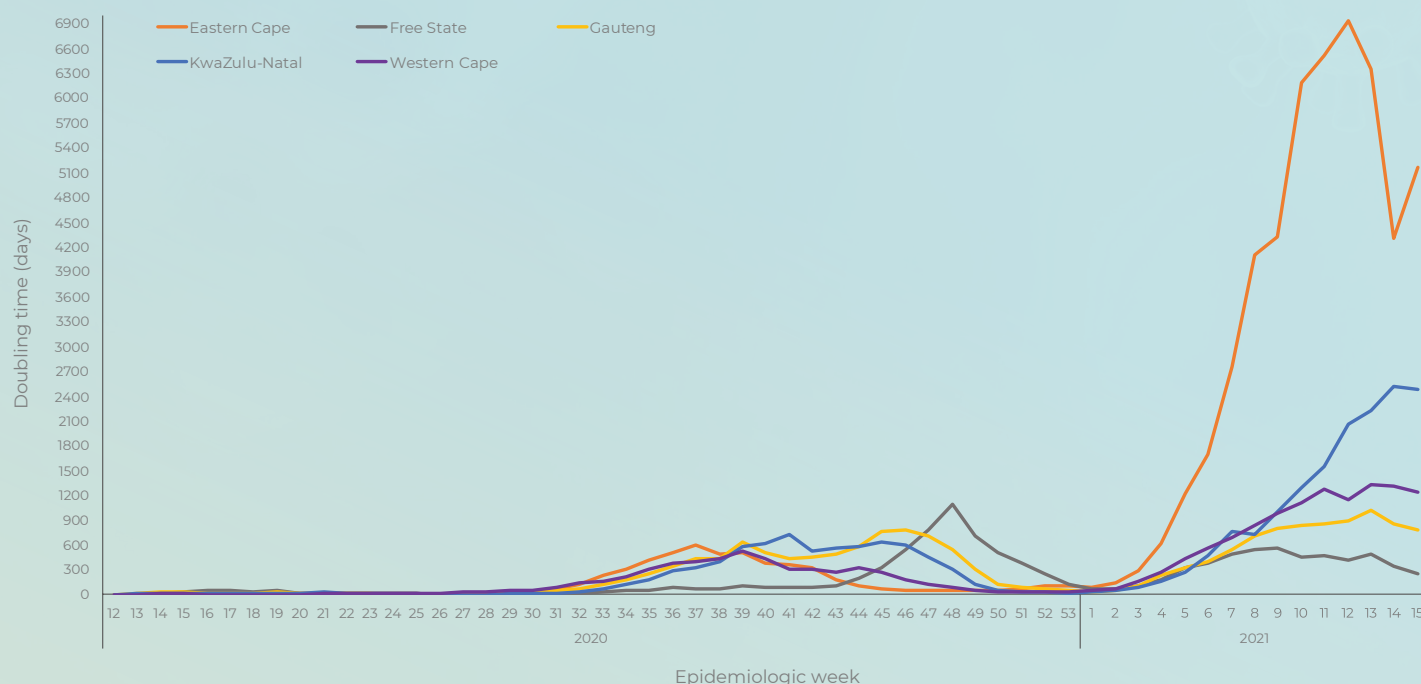


Figure 5. Doubling time of number of laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 by province (for 5 provinces with the majority of cases) and epidemiologic week, South Africa, 23 March-2020 –17 April 2021 (n=1 567 729)

Characteristics of COVID-19 cases in South Africa by age and sex

Cases of COVID-19 were reported across all age groups. The median age of COVID-19 cases in South Africa to date was 40 years with an interquartile range (IQR) of 29-53 years. The distribution of cases varied by age, with highest number of all cases to date in the 35-39-year (184 387/1 560 636, 11.8%) and 30-34-year (179 367/1 560 636, 11.5%) age groups (Figure 6). Similarly, among the cases reported in the past week, the highest number of cases was in the 35-39-year (762/7 555, 10.1%) and the 45-49-year (720/7 555, 9.5%) age groups. The median age for cases reported in week 16 of 2021 was the same (40 years, IQR 28-54), as that of total cases (40 years). The highest cumulative incidence risk remained among cases aged 50-54 years (5 351.1 cases per 100 000 persons), followed by cases aged 55-59 years (5 296.0 cases per 100 000 persons) and ≥80 years (5 209.0 cases per 100 000 persons). The lowest cumulative incidence risk was reported in the younger age-groups, 329.4 cases per 100 000 persons and 409.8 cases per 100 000 persons in the 0-4- and 5-9-year age groups, respectively (Figure 7 and Table 2). The highest weekly incidence risk among cases detected in week 16 of 2021 was reported in the 60-64-year age group (27.1 cases per 100 000 persons), followed by cases ≥80 years (27.0 cases per 100 000 persons), and the lowest weekly incidence risk was in

the 0-4-year age group (1.8 cases per 100 000 persons) (Figure 8 and Table 2).

To date, the majority of COVID-19 cases reported were female 57.8% (900 491/1 558 327). This trend continued in the past week where 57.7% (4 371/7 577) of cases were female. The cumulative incidence risk has remained consistently higher among females (2 927.1 cases per 100 000 persons) than among males (2 239.4 cases per 100 000 persons) (Figure 9). The peak cumulative incidence risk was in the 50-54-year-age group (5 593.2 cases per 100 000 persons) for females, and in the ≥80-year-age group (5 410.5 cases per 100 000 persons) for males (Figure 10). In week 16 of 2021, the highest weekly incidence risk was in the 60-64-year age group (27.7 cases per 100 000 persons) for females and in the 70-74-year age group (30.2 cases per 100 000 persons) for males. The higher prevalence and incidence risk among females compared to males could be explained by the fact that females are likely to be more represented in occupations, which put them in close proximity to others and thus exposing them to a higher risk of infection (e.g. teaching and health). This may also be partly explained by varying testing practices by age and sex (data not shown) and by different health seeking behaviour.

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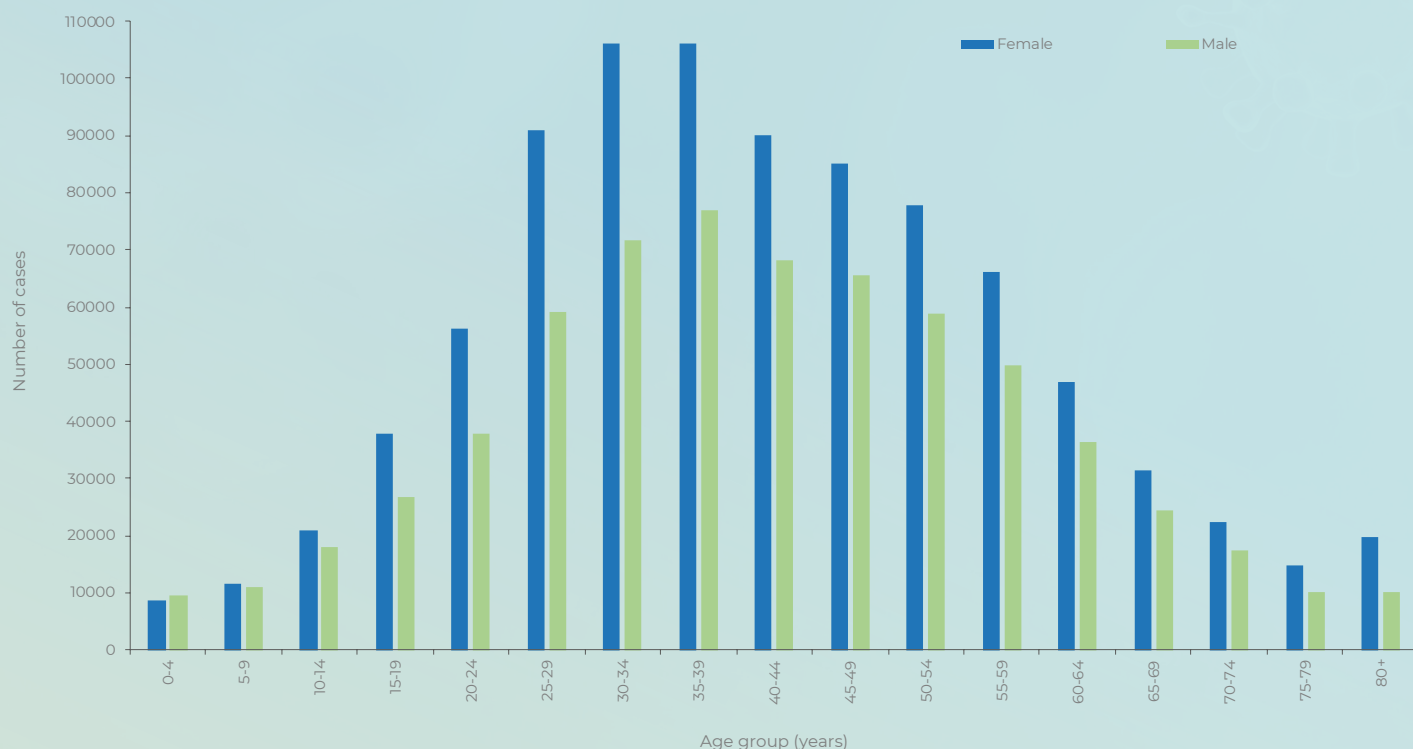


Figure 6. Number of laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 by age group and sex, South Africa, 3 March 2020 –24 April 2021 (n =1 544 892, sex/age missing for 30 579)

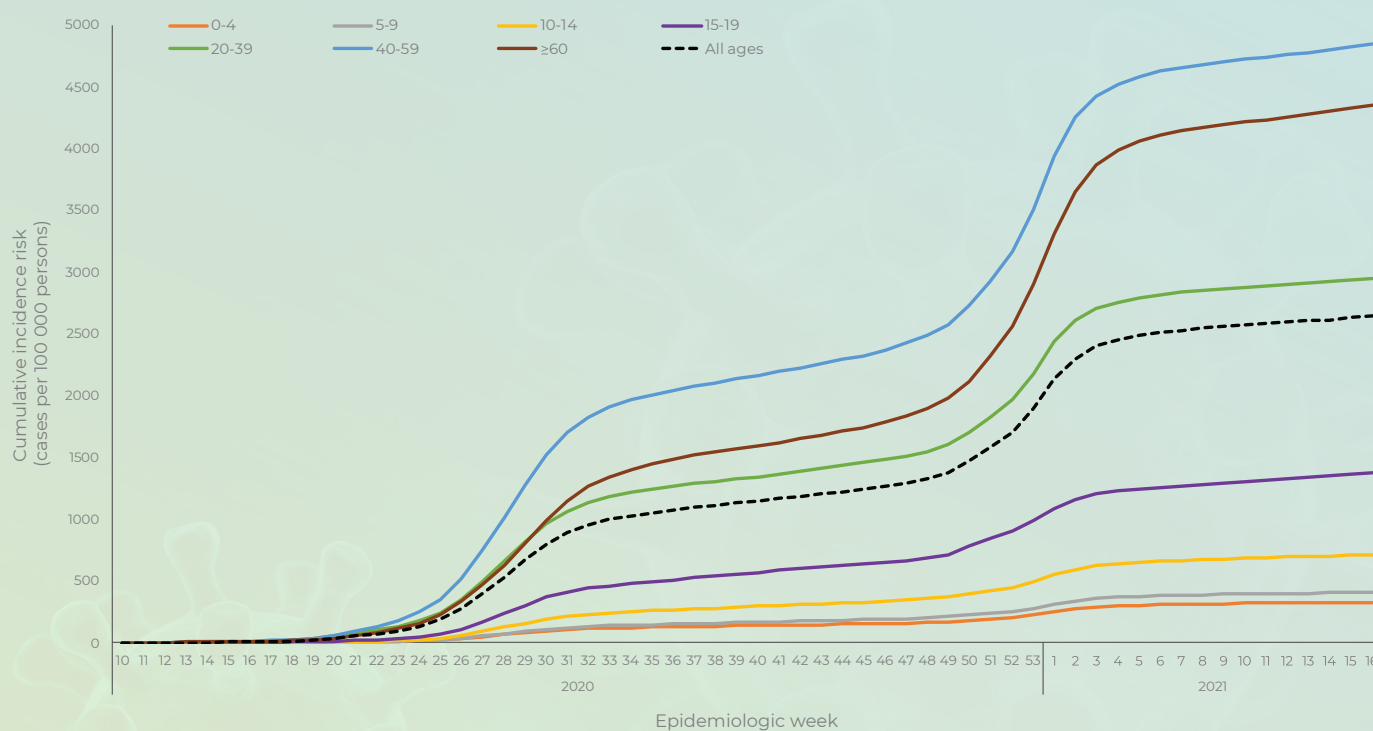


Figure 7. Cumulative incidence risk of laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 by age group in years and epidemiologic week, South Africa, 3 March 2020–24 April 2021 (n=1 560 636, 14 835 missing age)

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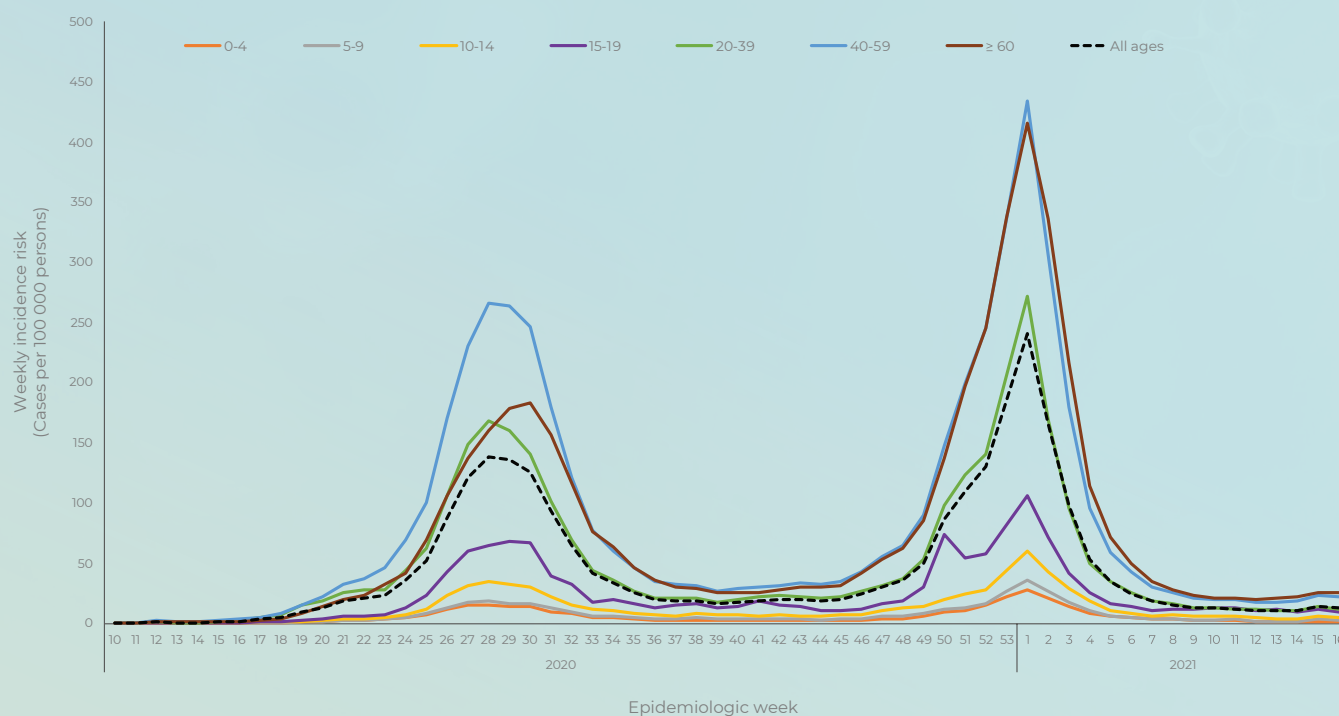


Figure 8. Weekly incidence risk of laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 by age group in years and epidemiologic week, South Africa, 3 March 2020 -24 April 2021 (n= 1 560 636, 14 835 missing age)

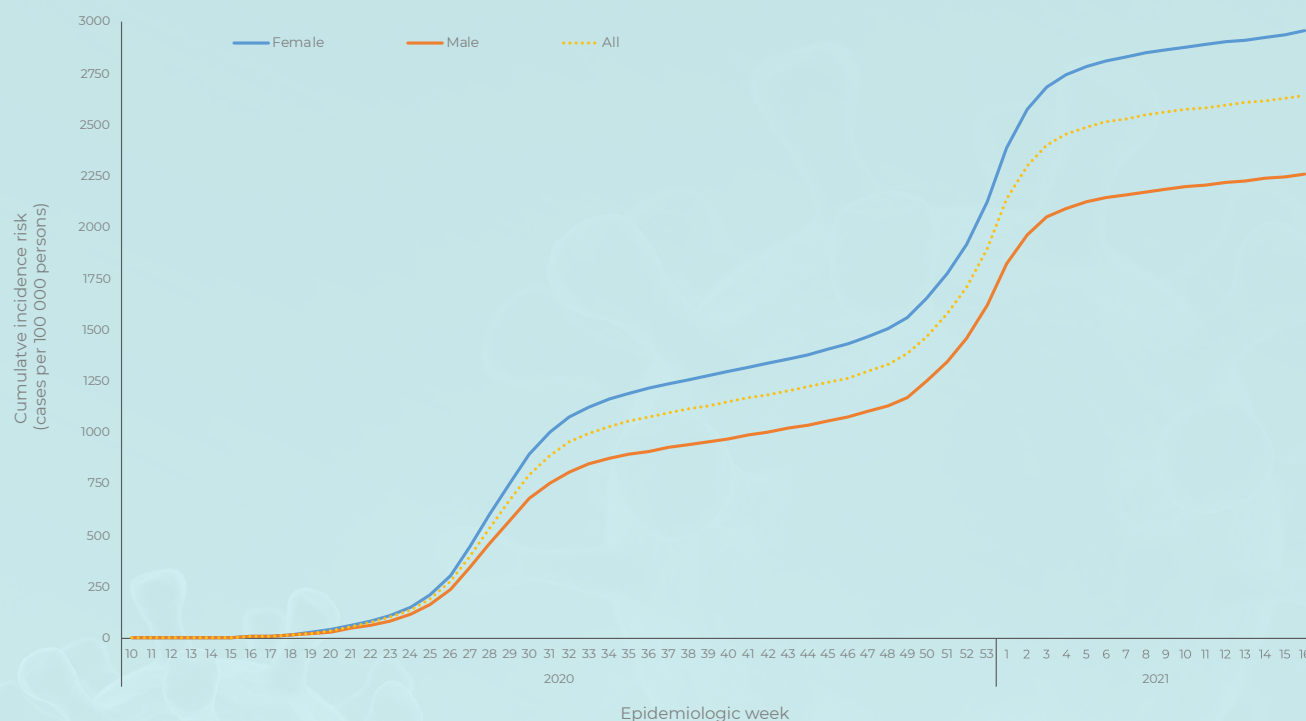


Figure 9. Cumulative incidence risk by sex and epidemiologic week, South Africa, 3 March 2020 -24 April 2021 (n= 1 558 327, sex missing for 17 144)

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Table 2. Number of laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 and cumulative/weekly incidence risk by age group, South Africa, 3 March 2020 –24 April 2021, n= 1 560 636, 14 835 missing age)

Age group (years)	Cumulative cases (n) (percentage, n/total cases in South Africa)	New cases ¹ detected in week 16 (18-24 Apr 2021), n (percentage ² , n/total)	Population in mid-2020 ³ , n	Cumulative incidence risk (cases per 100 000 persons)	Incidence risk of new cases detected in week 16 of 2021 (cases/100 000 persons)
0-4	18 920 (1.2)	103 (1.4)	5 743 450	329.4	1.8
5-9	23 425 (1.5)	129 (1.7)	5 715 952	409.8	2.3
10-14	39 880 (2.6)	290 (3.8)	5 591 553	713.2	5.2
15-19	65 559 (4.2)	453 (6.0)	4 774 579	1 373.1	9.5
20-24	95 272 (6.1)	492 (6.5)	4 823 367	1 975.2	10.2
25-29	151 755 (9.7)	635 (8.4)	5 420 754	2 799.5	11.7
30-34	179 367 (11.5)	666 (8.8)	5 641 750	3 179.3	11.8
35-39	184 387 (11.8)	762 (10.1)	4 798 293	3 842.8	15.9
40-44	159 617 (10.2)	669 (8.9)	3 733 942	4 274.8	17.9
45-49	151 713 (9.7)	720 (9.5)	3 169 648	4 786.4	22.7
50-54	137 590 (8.8)	665 (8.8)	2 571 263	5 351.1	25.9
55-59	117 111 (7.5)	567 (7.5)	2 211 309	5 296.0	25.6
60-64	84 211 (5.4)	486 (6.4)	1 796 316	4 688.0	27.1
65-69	56 484 (3.6)	360 (4.8)	1 408 665	4 009.8	25.6
70-74	40 165 (2.6)	260 (3.4)	1 007 174	3 987.9	25.8
75-79	25 110 (1.6)	142 (1.9)	637 062	3 941.5	22.3
≥80	30 070 (1.9)	156 (2.1)	577 273	5 209.0	27.0
Unknown	14 835				
Total	1 575 471	7 655	59 622 350	2 642.4	12.8

¹New cases refer to cases whose samples were collected or received in the current reporting week; ²Percentage=n/total number of new cases (specimen collected or received in current reporting week); ³2020 Mid-year population Statistics South Africa

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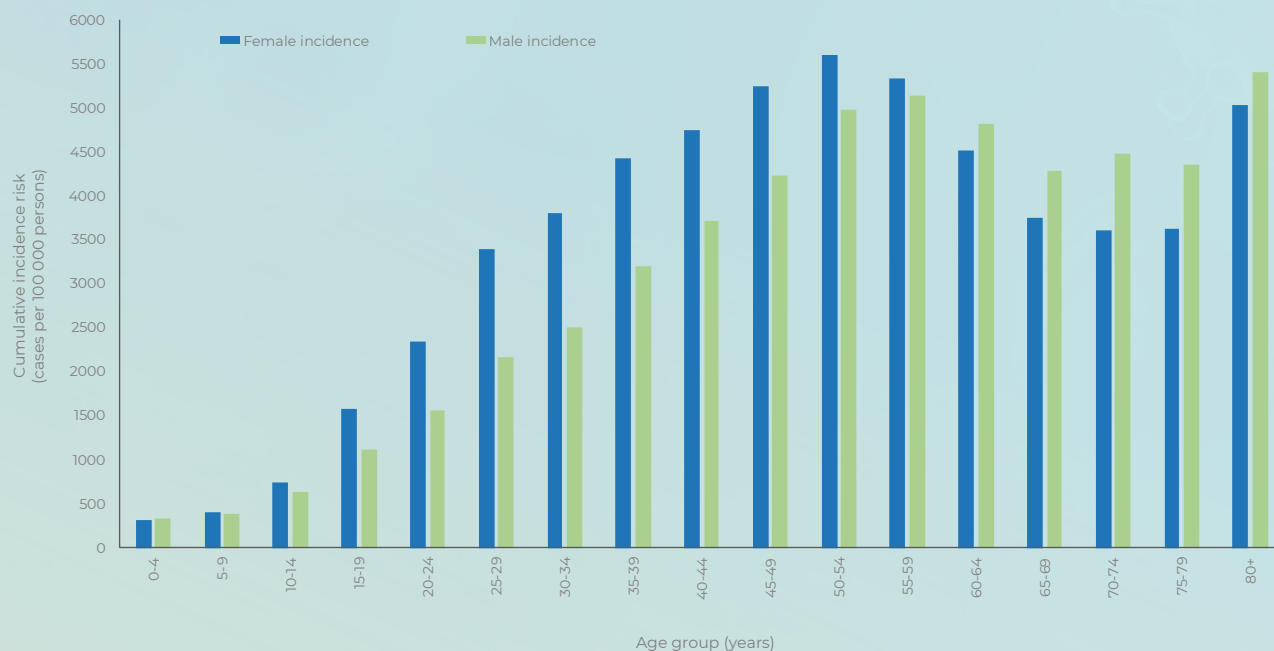


Figure 10. Cumulative risk by age group and sex, South Africa, 3 March 2020 –24 April 2021 (n=1 544 892, sex/age missing for 30 579)

Provincial trends of COVID-19 cases

Following the decline in the number of new cases since week 2 of 2021, from week 10 of 2021 to date all provinces have reported a slight increase in weekly incidence risk which varied by province and week. Changes in trends by district and age group for each province are presented below.

Eastern Cape Province

Of the 195 979 cases reported from the Eastern Cape Province, 173 985 (88.8%) cases had allocation by district. In the past week, the Buffalo City Metro (0.1 cases per 100 000 persons, 6.3% increase), Alfred Nzo (0.1 cases per 100 000 persons, 33.3% increase), and OR. Tambo (0.1 cases per 100 000 persons, 50.0% increase) districts reported an increase in weekly incidence risk, other districts reported a decrease in weekly incidence risk, compared to the previous week (Figure 11).

In the past week, all the age groups reported a decrease in weekly incidence risk, except the ≥ 60 -year age group (0.4 cases per 100 000 persons, 7.5% increase) which reported an increase in weekly incidence risk, compared to the previous week (Figure 12).

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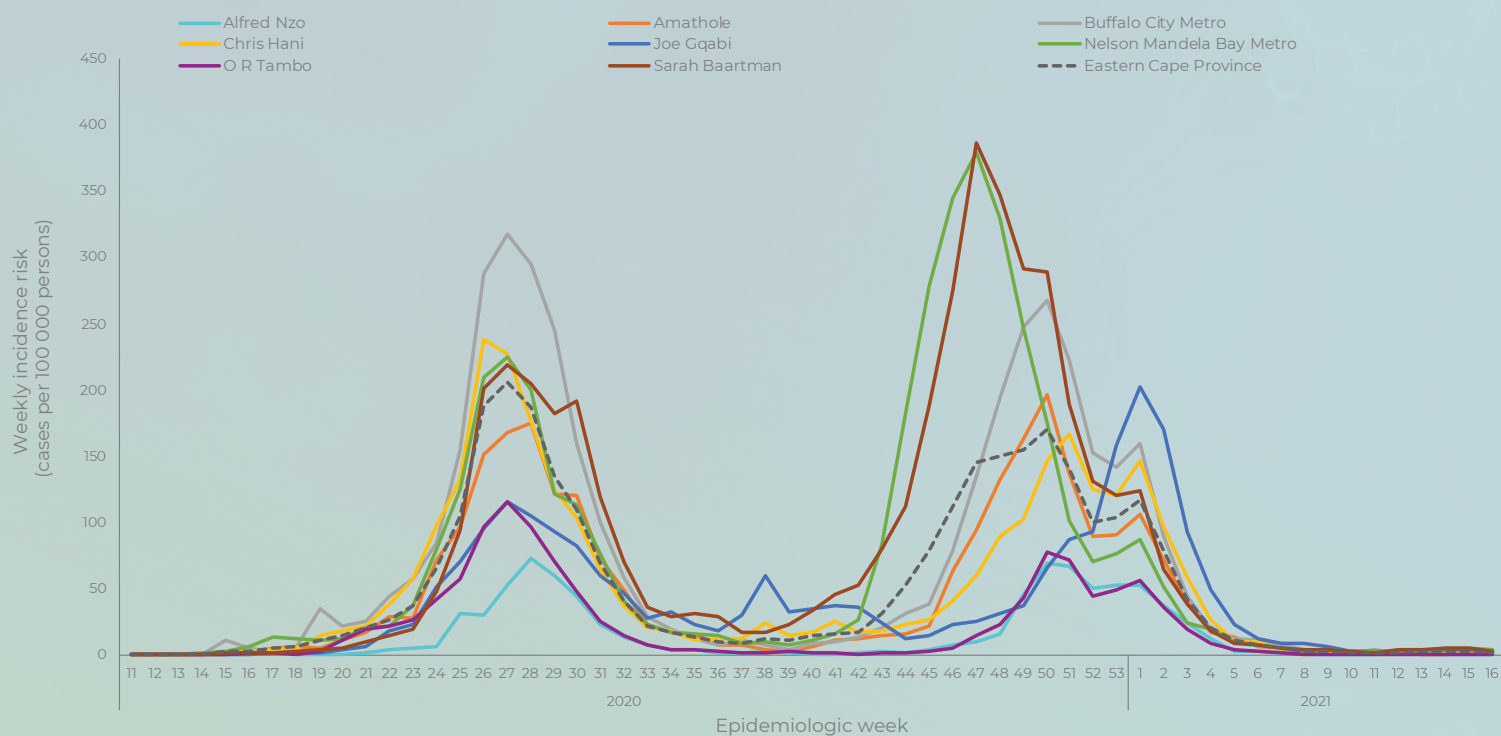


Figure 11. Weekly incidence risk of laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 by district and epidemiologic week, Eastern Cape Province, 3 March 2020 –24 April 2021 (n=173 985, 21 994 missing district)

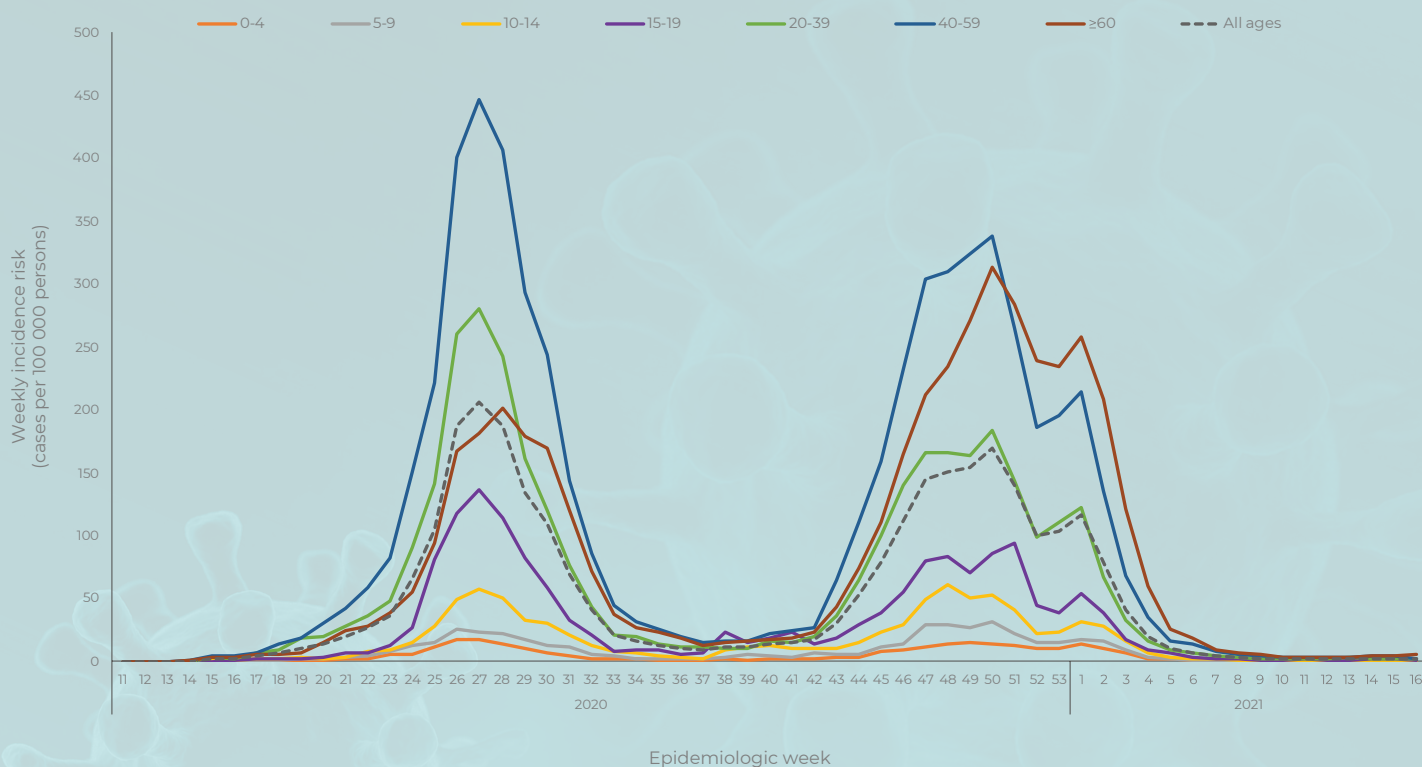


Figure 12. Weekly incidence risk of laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 by age group in years and epidemiologic week, Eastern Cape Province, 3 March 2020 –24 April 2021 (n=193 919, 2 060 missing age)

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Western Cape Province

Of the 286 109 cases reported from the Western Cape Province, 268 699 (93.9%) cases had allocation by district. In week 16 of 2021, the Garden Route (1.4 cases per 100 000 persons, 10.5% increase), and the Central Karoo (9.3 cases per 100 000 persons, 140.0% increase) districts reported an increase in weekly incidence risk, other districts reported a decrease in weekly incidence risk, compared to the previous week (Figure 13).

In the past week, all the age groups reported a decrease in weekly incidence risk, compared to the previous week (Figure 14).

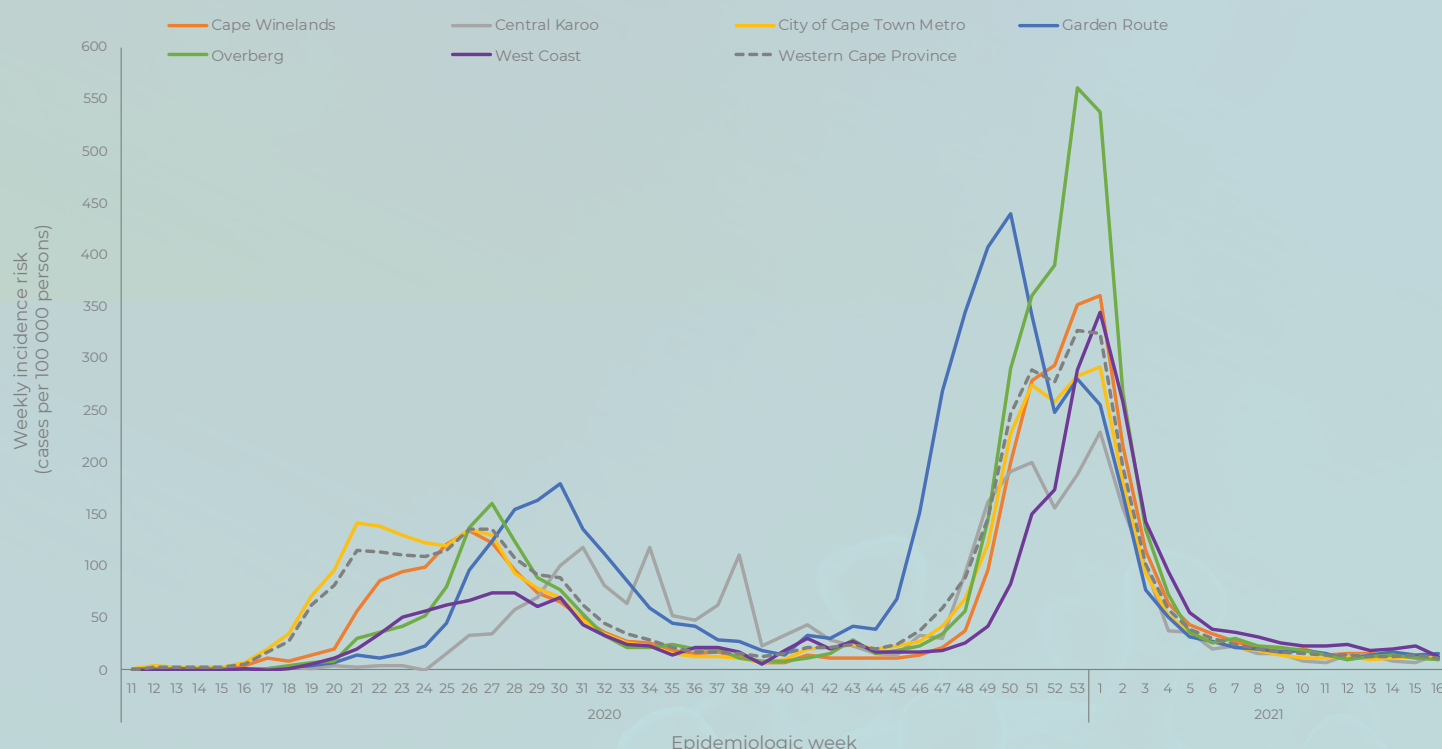


Figure 13. Weekly incidence risk of laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 by district and epidemiologic week, Western Cape Province, 3 March 2020 –24 April 2021 (n=268 699, 17 410 missing district)

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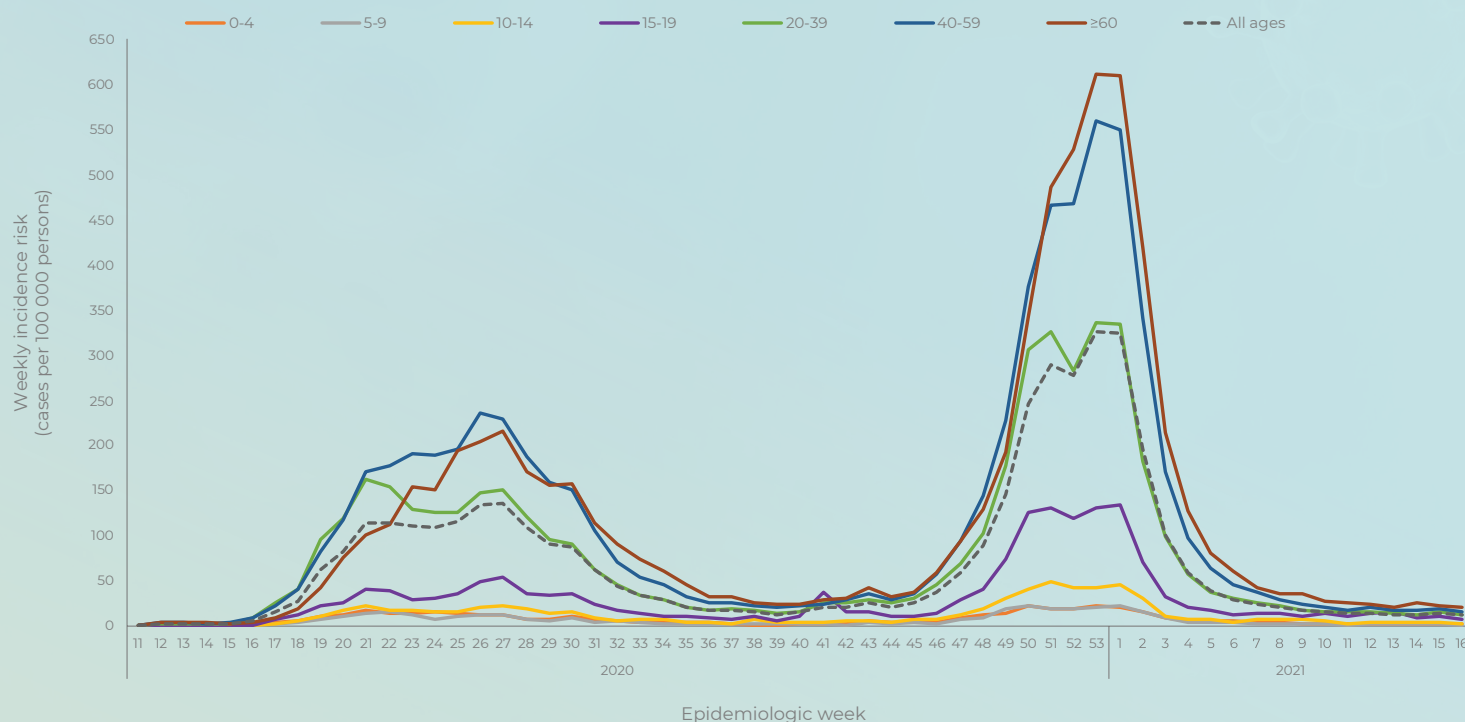


Figure 14. Weekly incidence risk of laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 by age group in years and epidemiologic week, Western Cape Province, 3 March 2020 –24 April 2021 (n=285 142, 967 missing age)

Gauteng Province

Of the 421 880 cases reported from the Gauteng Province, 363 900 (86.3%) had allocation by district. In the past week, all the districts reported a decrease in weekly incidence risk, except the West Rand District (0.9 cases per 100 000 persons, 6.2% increase) which reported an increase in weekly incidence risk, compared to the previous week (Figure 15).

In the past week, all the age groups reported a decrease in weekly incidence risk, compared to the previous week (Figure 16).

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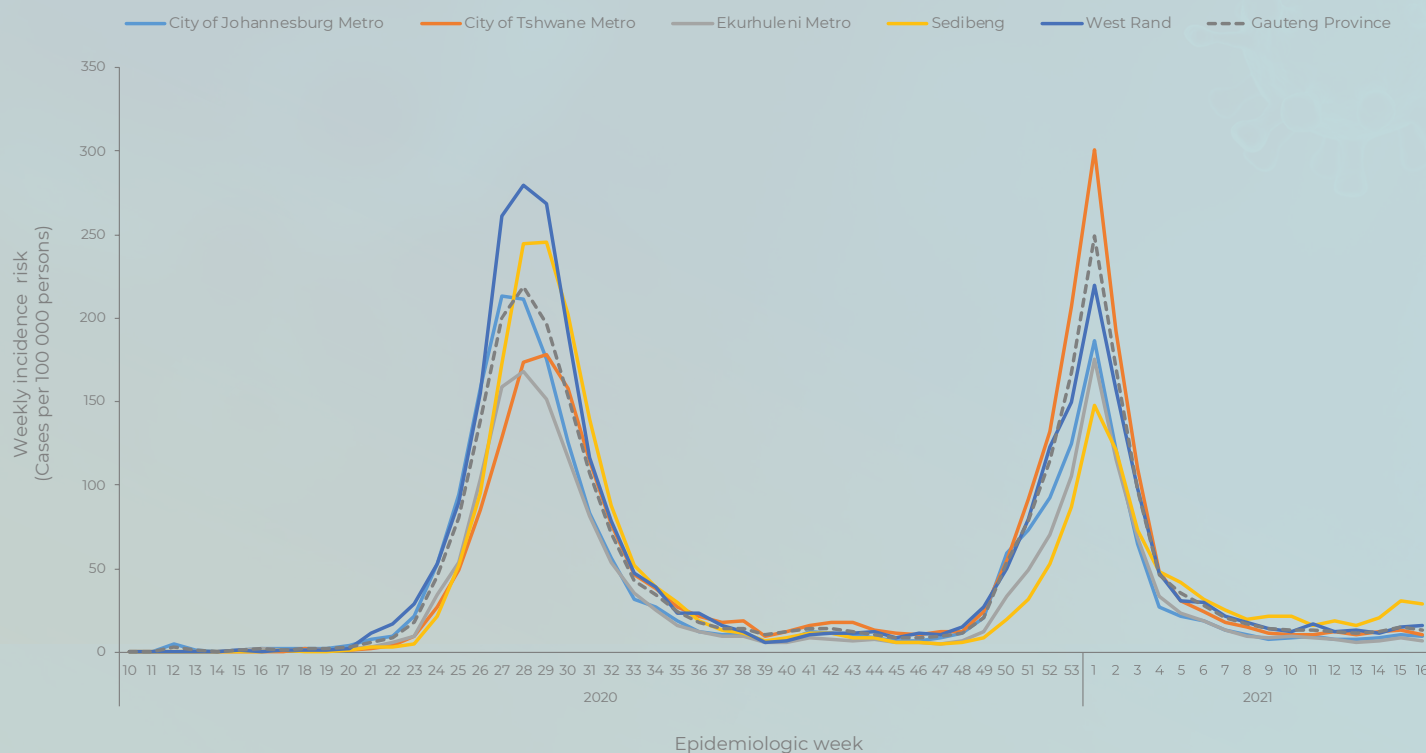


Figure 15. Weekly incidence risk of laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 by district and epidemiologic week, Gauteng Province, 3 March 2020 –24 April 2021 (n=363 900, 57 980 missing district)

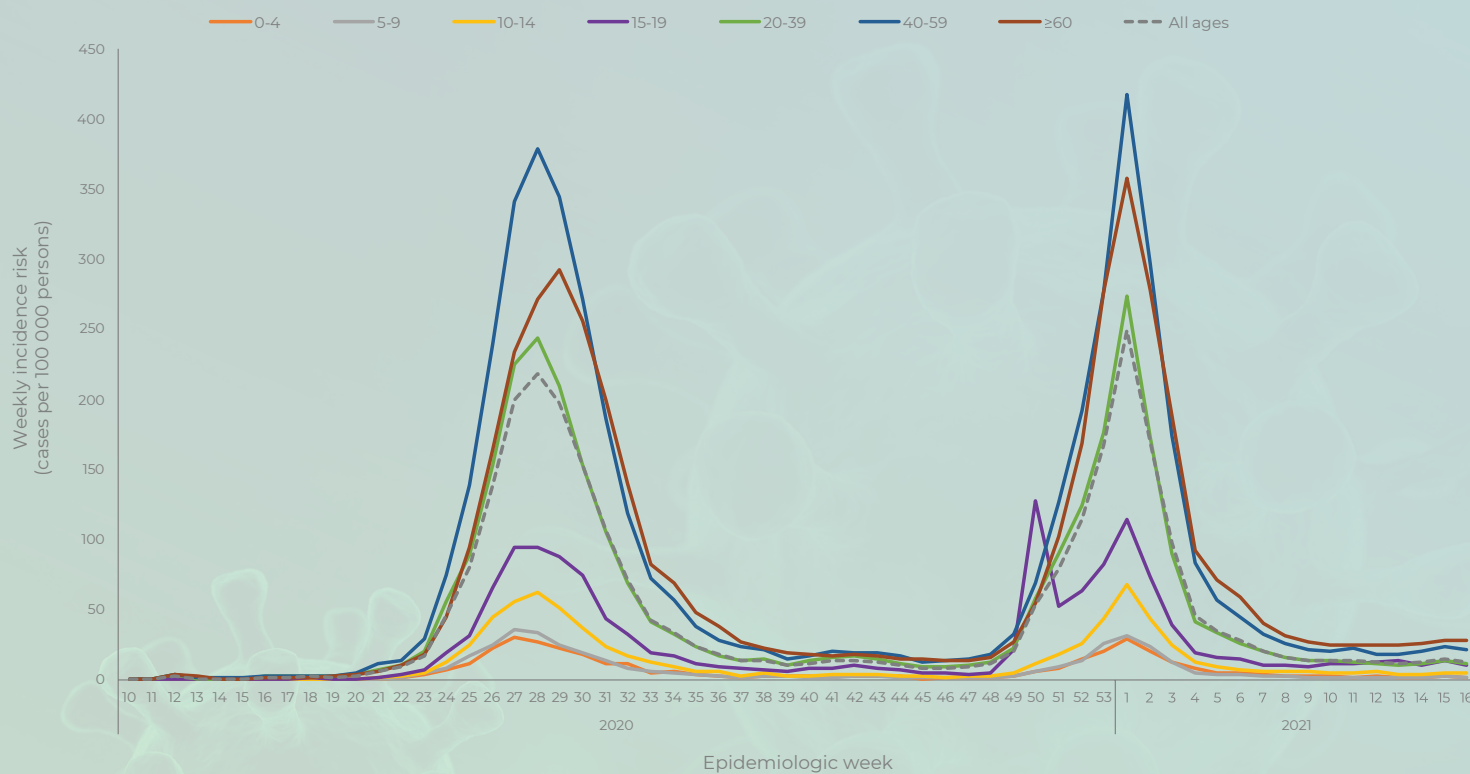


Figure 16. Weekly incidence risk of laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 by age group in years and epidemiologic week, Gauteng Province, 3 March 2020 –24 April 2021 (n=417 008, 4 872 missing age)

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KwaZulu-Natal Province

Of the 336 297 cases reported from the KwaZulu-Natal Province, 251 389 (74.8%) had allocation by district. In the past week, all the districts reported a decrease in weekly incidence risk, except the Ugu District which reported an increase in weekly incidence risk (0.5 cases per 100 000 persons, 33.3% increase), and the uThukela District showed no change in weekly incidence risk, compared to the previous week (Figure 17).

In week 16 of 2021, all the age groups reported a decrease in weekly incidence risk, compared to the previous week (Figure 18).

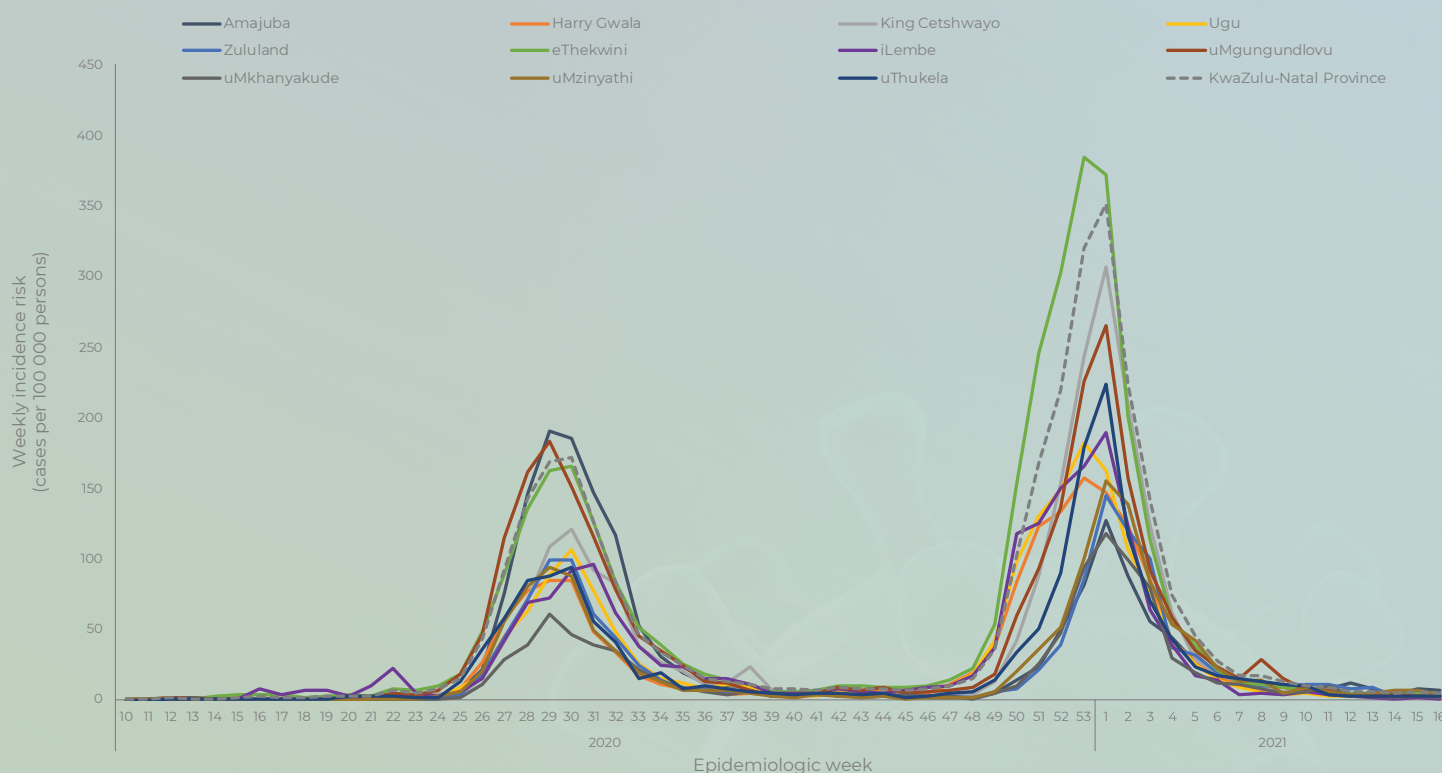


Figure 17. Weekly incidence risk of laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 by district and epidemiologic week, KwaZulu-Natal Province, 3 March 2020 –24 April 2021 (n=251 389, 84 908 missing district)

COVID-19 WEEKLY EPIDEMIOLOGY BRIEF

WEEK 16 2021

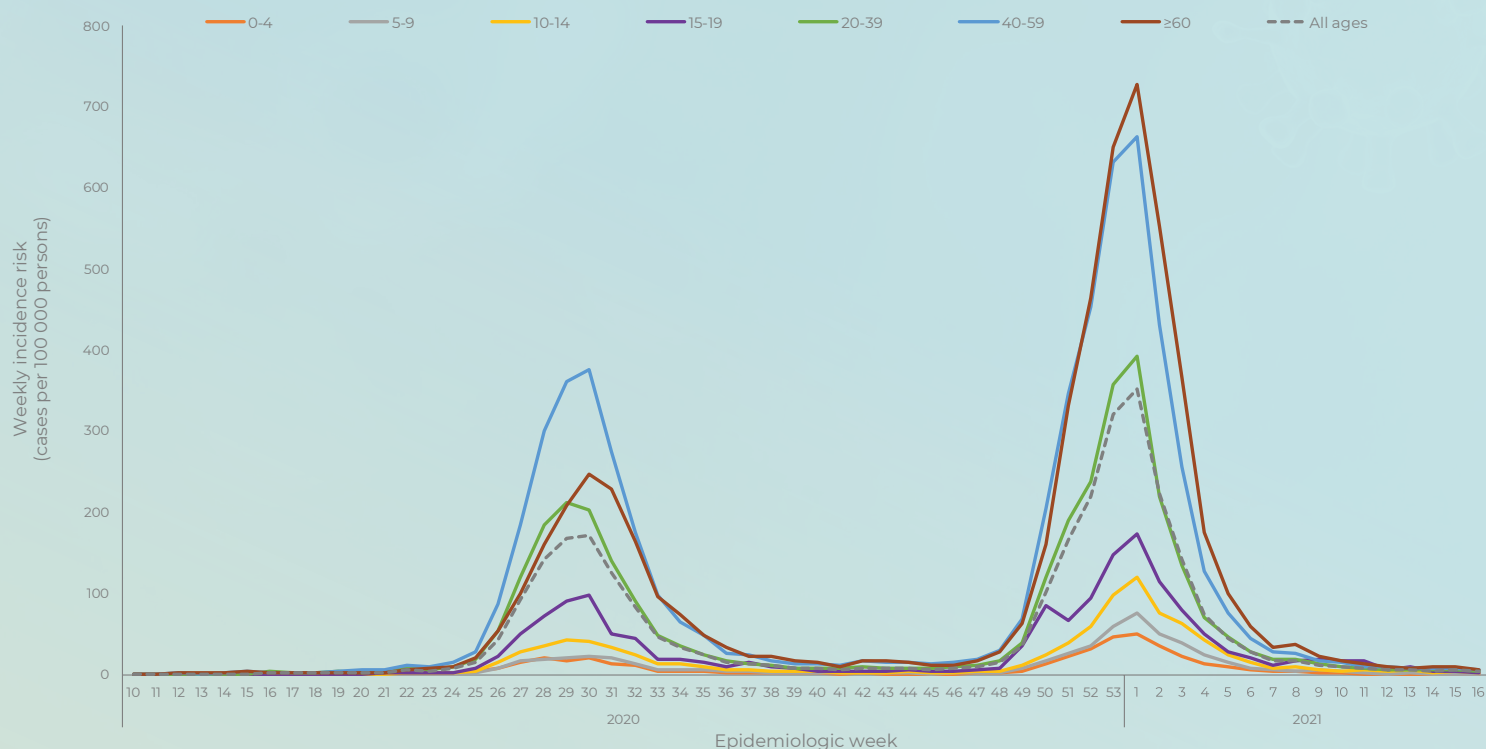


Figure 18. Weekly incidence risk of laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 by age group in years and epidemiologic week, KwaZulu-Natal Province, 3 March 2020 –24 April 2021 (n=332 764, 3 533 missing age)

Free State Province

Of the 87 568 cases reported from the Free State Province, 79 933 (91.3%) had allocation by district. In the past week, the Fezile Dabi (3.1 cases per 100 000 persons, 10.6% increase), the Mangaung Metro (4.4 cases per 100 000 persons, 8.3% increase), and the Xhariep (20.9 cases per 100 000 persons, 103.8% increase) districts reported an increase in weekly incidence risk, other districts reported a decrease in weekly incidence risk, compared to the previous week (Figure 19).

In the past week, all the age groups reported an increase in weekly incidence risk, except the 20-39-year age group (4.9 cases per 100 000 persons, 10.1% decrease) which reported a decrease in weekly incidence risks, compared to the previous week (Figure 20). The increase in weekly incidence risk ranged from 0.4 cases per 100 000 persons (3.7% increase) in the 5-9-year to 8.6 cases per 100 000 persons (9.3% increase) in the ≥60-year age groups.

COVID-19 WEEKLY EPIDEMIOLOGY BRIEF

WEEK 16 2021

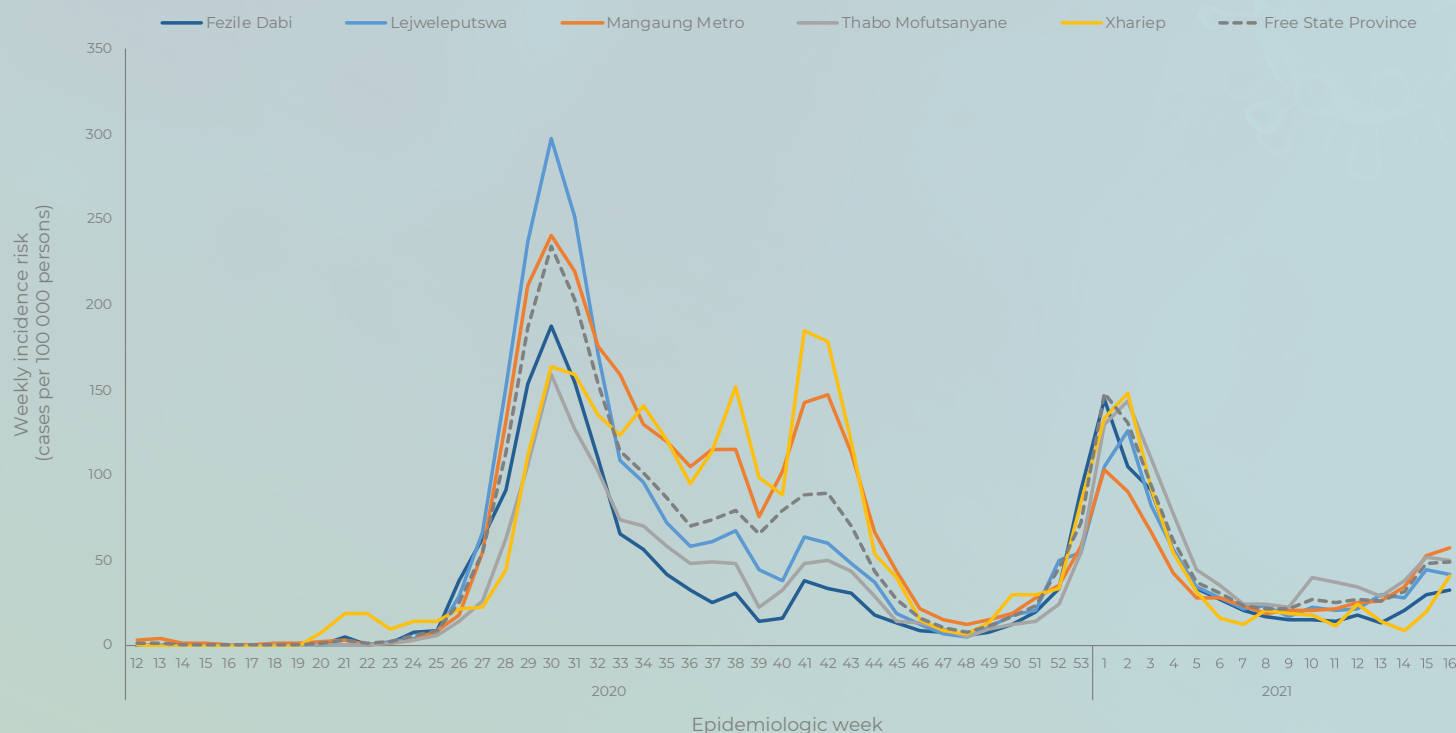


Figure 19. Weekly incidence risk of laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 by district and epidemiologic week, Free State Province, 3 March 2020–24 April 2021 (n=79 933, 7 635 missing district)

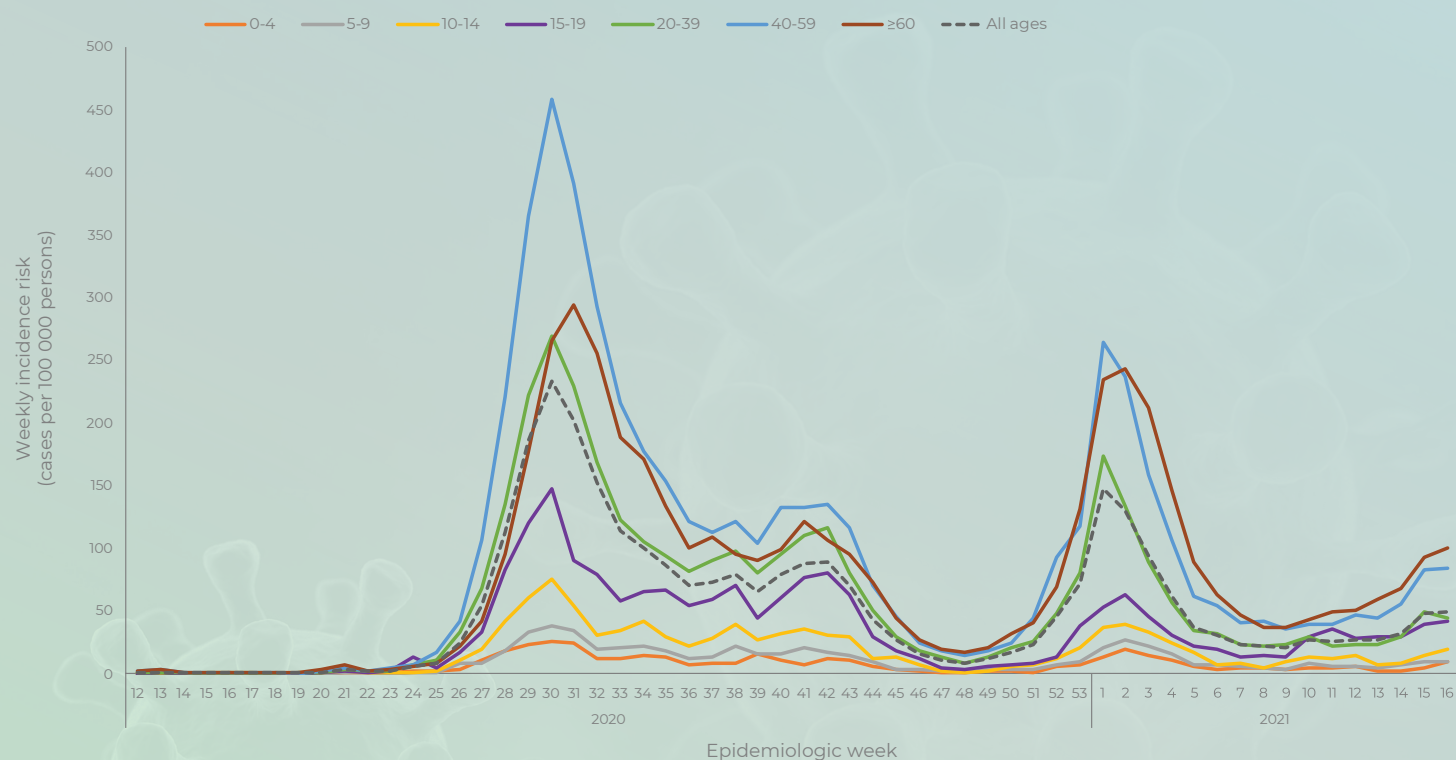


Figure 20. Weekly incidence risk of laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 by age group in years and epidemiologic week, Free State Province, 3 March 2020–24 April 2021 (n=87 194, 374 missing age)

COVID-19 WEEKLY EPIDEMIOLOGY BRIEF

WEEK 16 2021

Limpopo Province

Of the 63 784 cases reported from the Limpopo Province, 55 561 (87.1%) had allocation by district. In the past week, all the districts reported an increase in weekly incidence risk, except the Vhembe District (0.4 cases per 100 000 persons, 20.0% decrease) which reported a decrease in weekly incidence risk, compared to the previous week (Figure 21). The increase in weekly incidence risk ranged from 0.1 cases per 100 000 persons (2.3% increase) in the Waterberg to 1.1 cases per 100 000 persons (144.4% increase) in the Sekhukhune districts.

In the past week, the 40-59-year (0.2 cases per 100 000 persons, 3.1% increase), the 10-14-year (0.3 cases per 100 000 persons, 100.0% increase), and the 20-39-year (1.2 cases per 100 000 persons, 57.9% increase) age groups reported an increase in weekly incidence risk, while the 5-9-year and ≥ 60 -year age groups showed no change in weekly incidence risk, compared to the previous week (Figure 22).

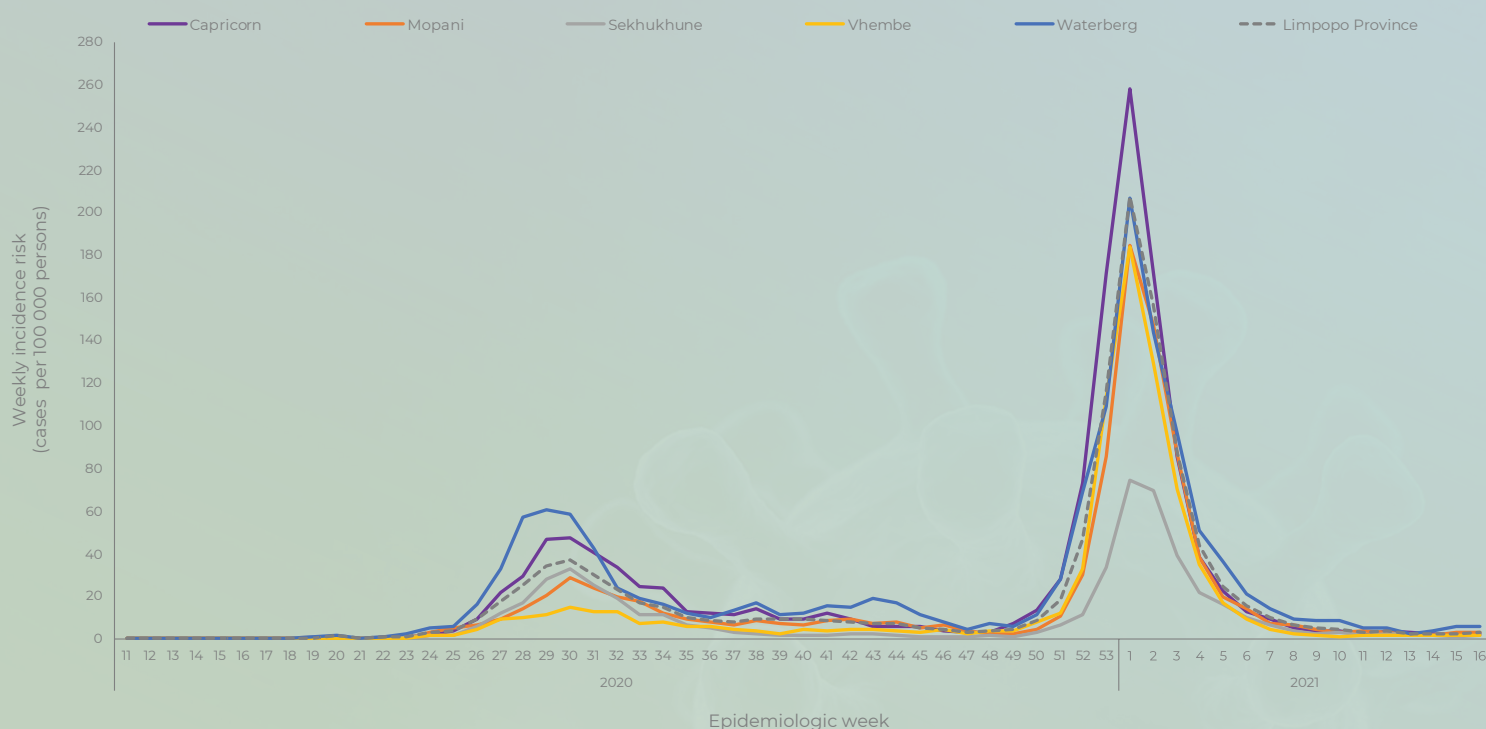


Figure 21. Weekly incidence risk of laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 by district and epidemiologic week, Limpopo Province, 3 March 2020 –24 April 2021 (n=55 561, 8 223 missing district)

COVID-19 WEEKLY EPIDEMIOLOGY BRIEF

WEEK 16 2021

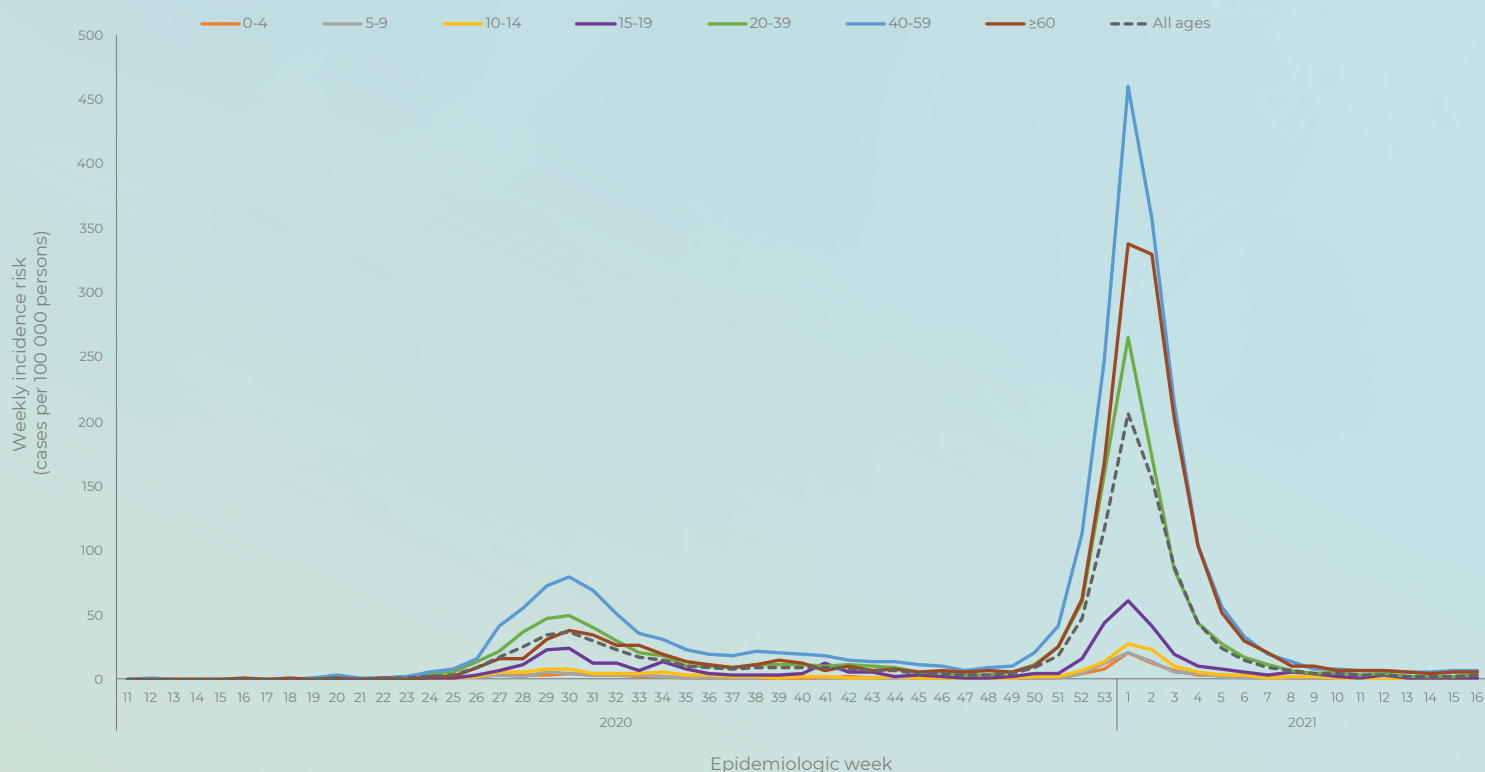


Figure 22. Weekly incidence risk of laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 by age group in years and epidemiologic week, Limpopo Province, 3 March 2020 –24 April 2021 (n=63 421, 363 missing age)

Mpumalanga Province

Of the 77 706 cases reported from the Mpumalanga Province, 62 275 (80.1%) had allocation by district. In the past week, all the districts reported a decrease in weekly incidence risk, compared to the previous week (Figure 24).

In the past week, all the age groups reported a decrease in weekly incidence risk, except the 5-9-year age group (0.4 cases per 100 000 persons, 22.2% increase) which reported an increase in weekly incidence risk, and 0-4-year age group showed no change in weekly incidence risk, compared to the previous week (Figure 23).

COVID-19 WEEKLY EPIDEMIOLOGY BRIEF

WEEK 16 2021

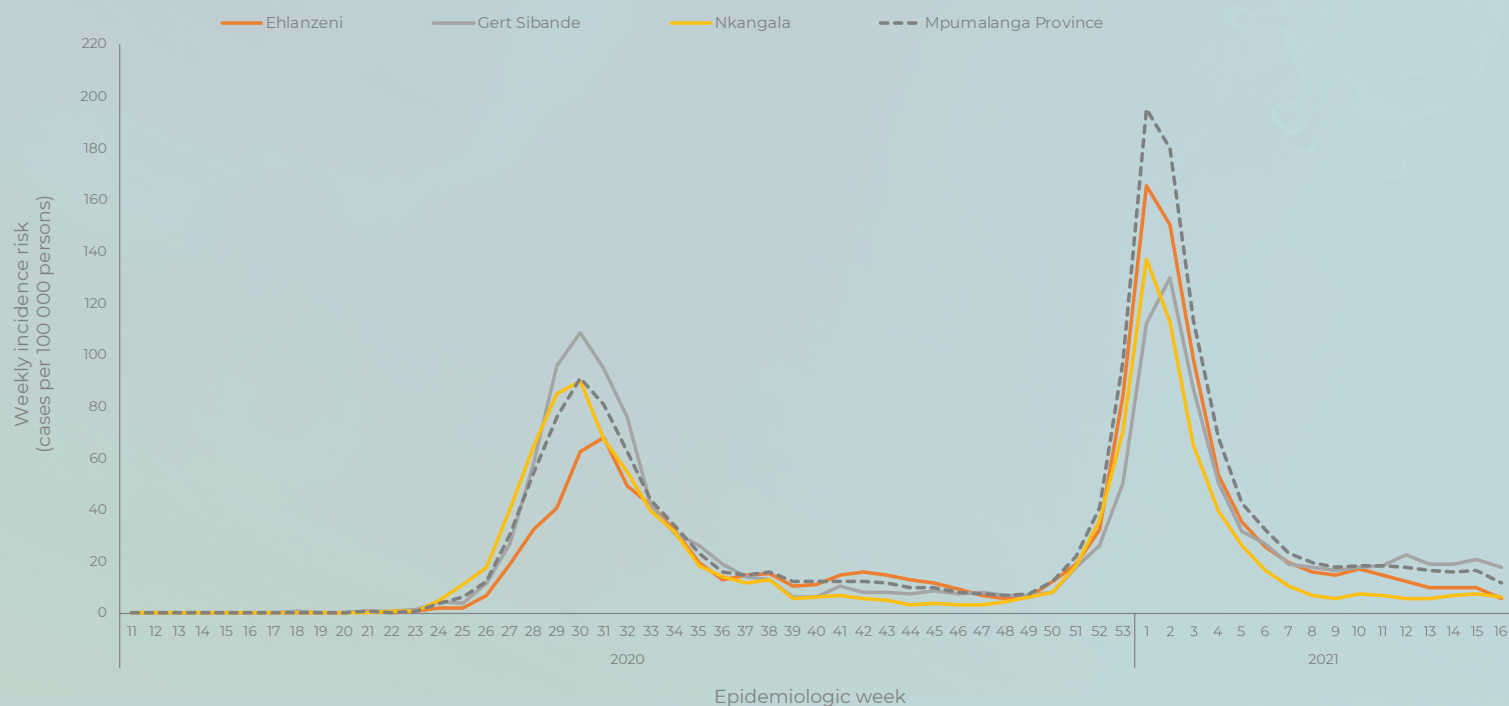


Figure 23. Weekly incidence risk of laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 by district and epidemiologic week, Mpumalanga Province, 3 March 2020 -24 April 2021 (n=62 275, 15 431 missing district)

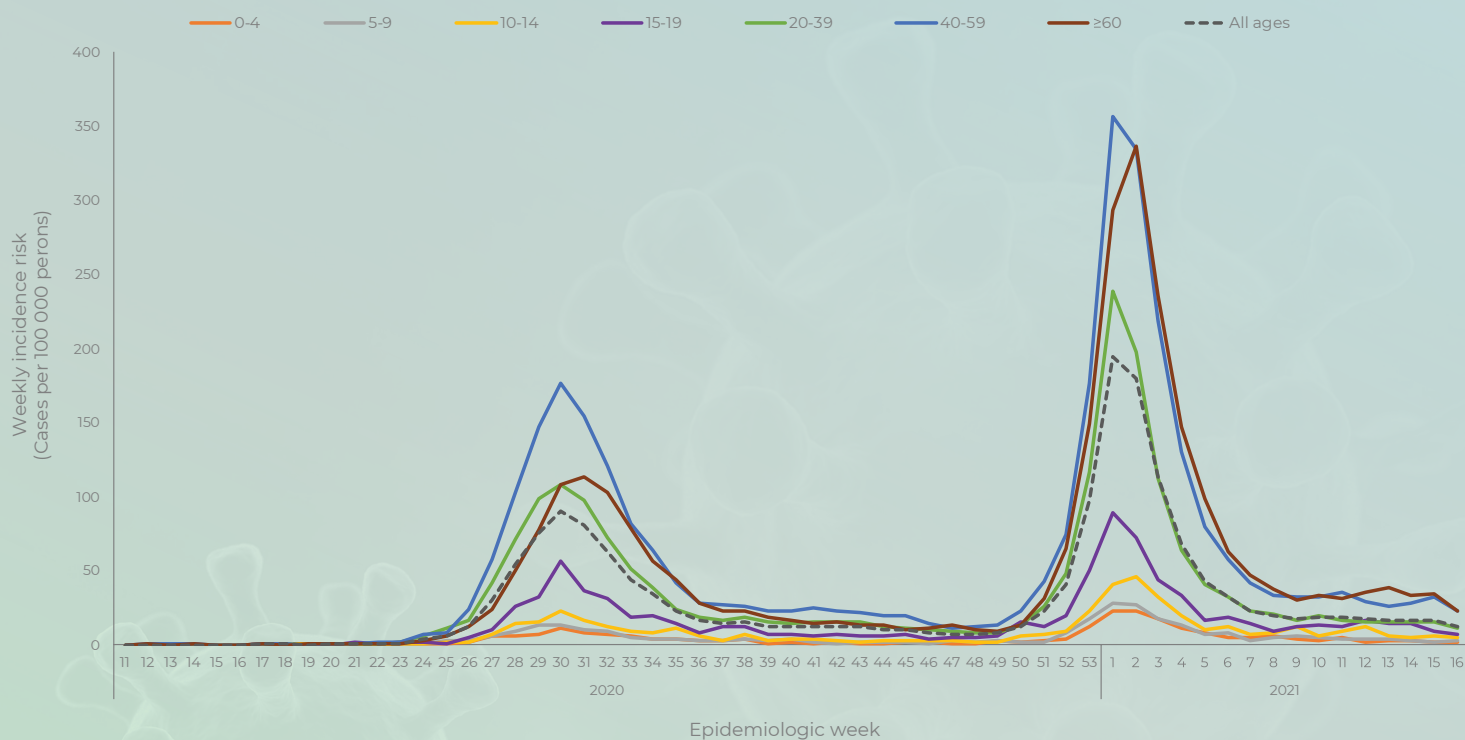


Figure 24. Weekly incidence risk of laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 by age group and epidemiologic week, Mpumalanga Province, 3 March 2020 -24 April 2021 (n=76 170, 1 536 missing age)

COVID-19 WEEKLY EPIDEMIOLOGY BRIEF

WEEK 16 2021

North West Province

Of the 66 893 cases reported from the North West Province, 54 845 (82.0%) had allocation by district. In the past week, the Dr Ruth Segomotsi (0.8 cases per 100 000 persons, 7.0% increase) and the Dr Kenneth Kaunda (3.6 cases per 100 000 persons, 13.4% increase) districts reported an increase in weekly incidence risk, compared to the previous week (Figure 25).

In the past week, the 15-19-year (0.3 cases per 100 000 persons, 1.7% increase), ≥ 60 -year (3.3 cases per 100 000 persons, 7.5% increase) and the 40-59-year (3.6 cases per 100 000 persons, 10.1% increase) age groups reported an increase in weekly incidence risk, compared to the previous week (Figure 26).

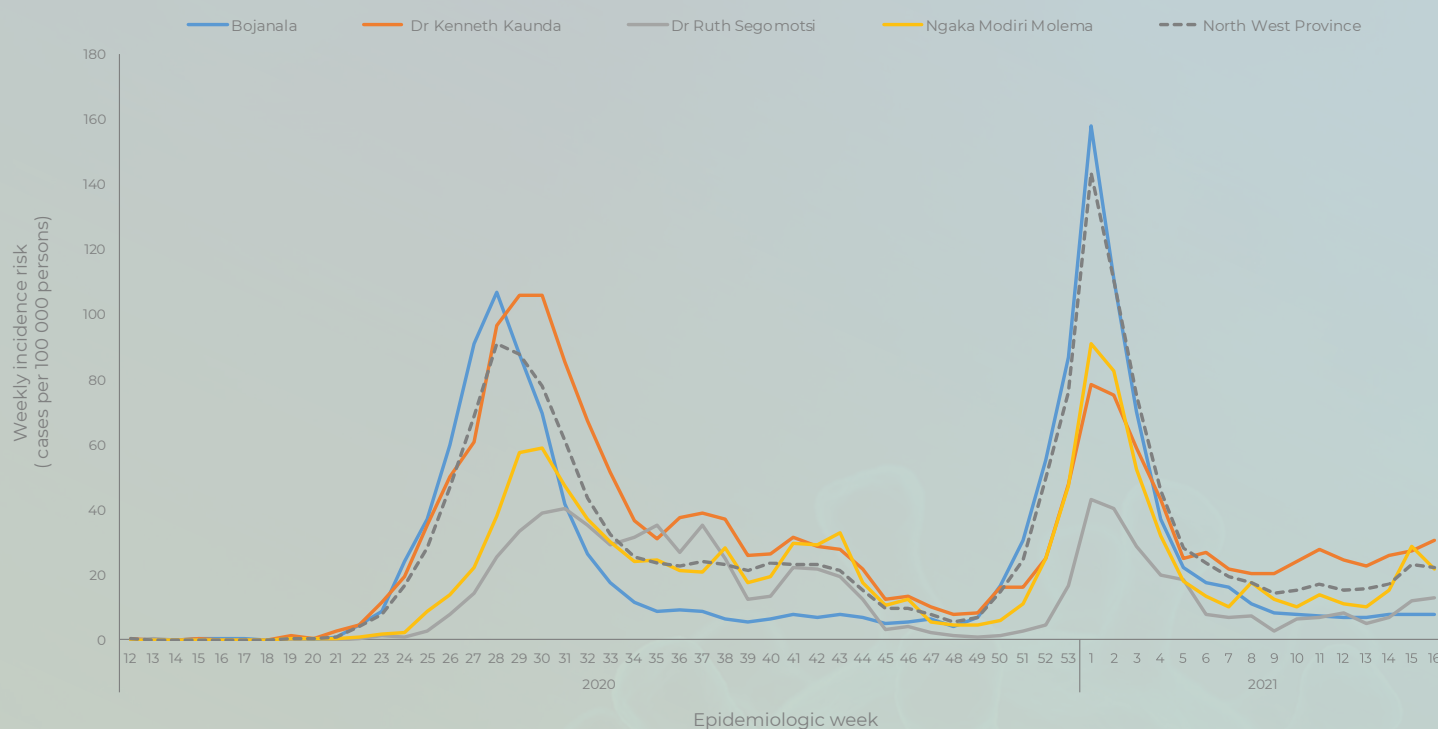


Figure 25. Weekly incidence risk of laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 by district and epidemiologic week, North West Province, 3 March 2020 -24 April 2021 (n=54 845, 12 048 missing district)

COVID-19 WEEKLY EPIDEMIOLOGY BRIEF

WEEK 16 2021

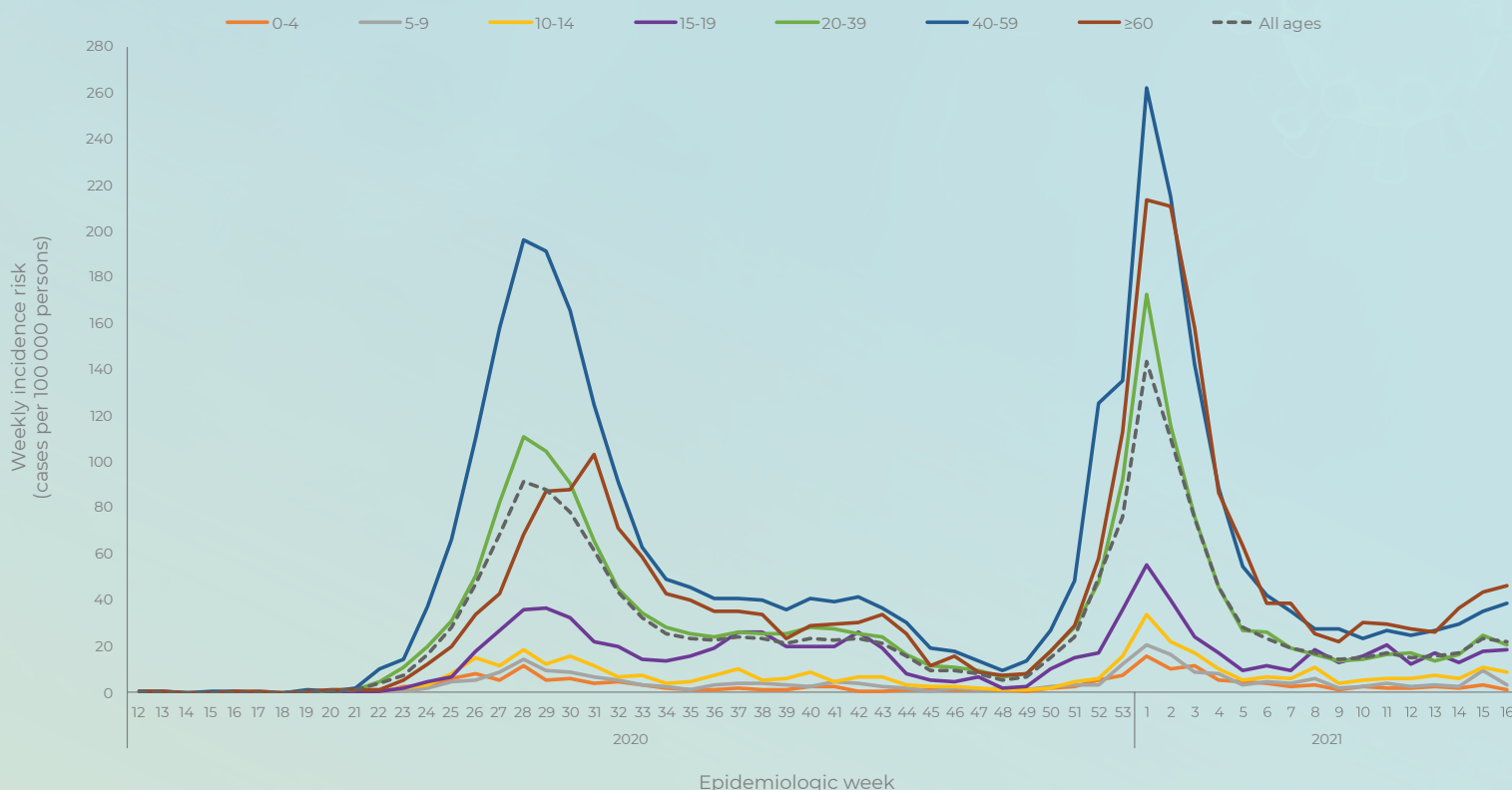


Figure 26. Weekly incidence risk of laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 by age group in years and epidemiologic week, North West Province, 3 March 2020 –24 April 2021 (n=66 095, 798 missing age)

Northern Cape Province

Of the 39 255 cases reported from the Northern Cape Province, 32 792 (83.5%) had allocation by district. In the past week, all the districts reported an increase in weekly incidence risk, except the Namakwa District (6.1 cases per 100 000 persons, 6.3% decrease) which reported a decrease in weekly incidence risk, and the John Taolo Gaetsewe District showed no change in weekly incidence risk, compared to the previous week (Figure 27).

In the past week, four age groups (0-4, 20-39, 40-59, and ≥60-year age groups) reported an increase in weekly incidence risk, compared to the previous week (Figure 28). The increase ranged from 1.6 cases per 100 000 persons (14.3% increase) in the 0-4-year to 56.1 cases per 100 000 persons (59.2% increase) in the ≥60-year age groups.

COVID-19 WEEKLY EPIDEMIOLOGY BRIEF

WEEK 16 2021

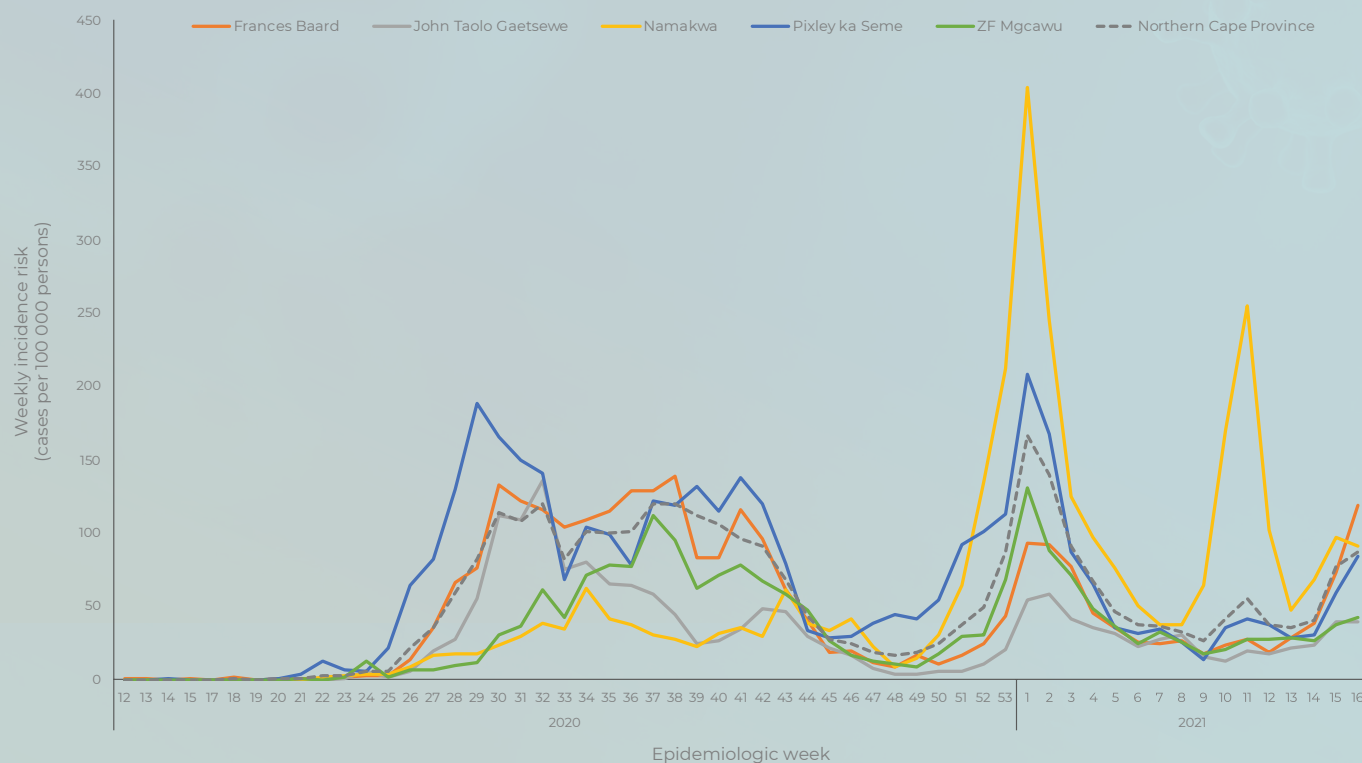


Figure 27. Weekly incidence risk of laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 by district and epidemiologic week, Northern Cape Province, 3 March 2020 -24 April 2021 (n=32 792, 6 463 missing district)

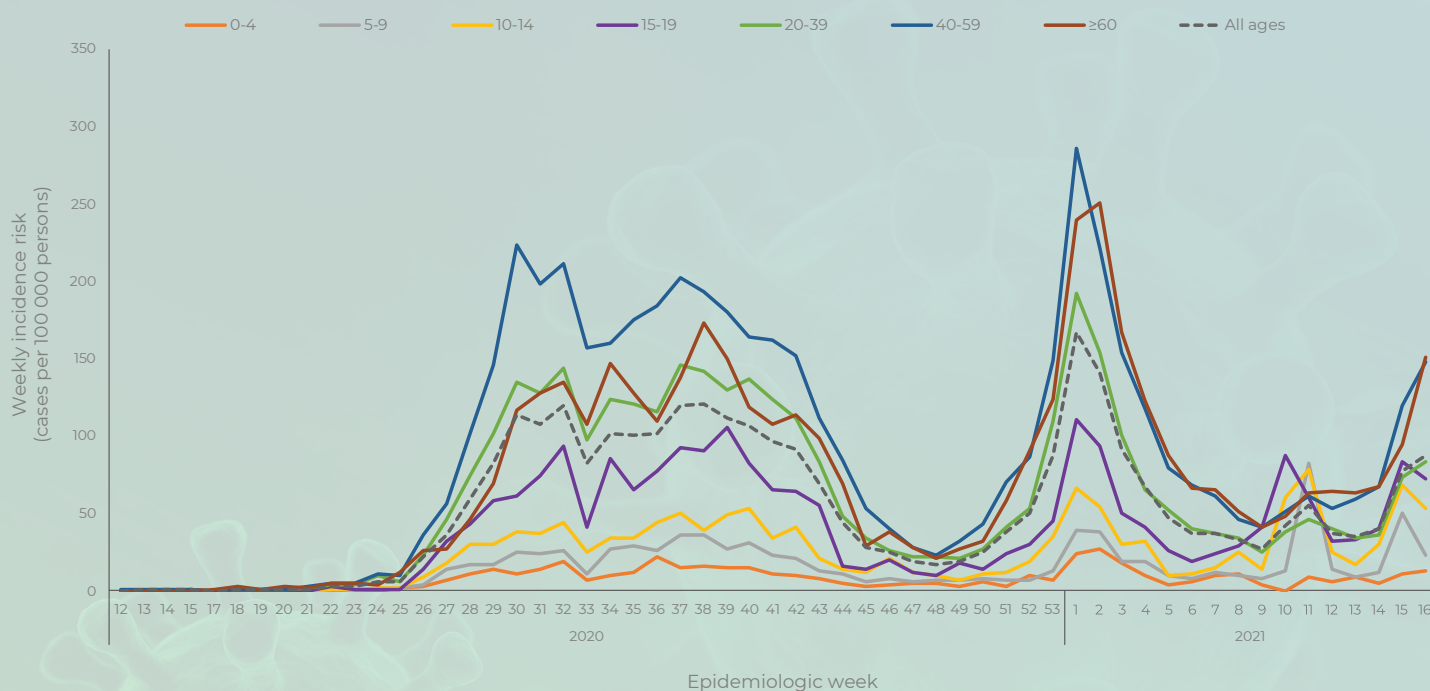


Figure 28. Weekly incidence risk of laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 by age group in years and epidemiologic week, Northern Cape Province, 3 March 2020 -24 April 2021 (n=38 923, 332 missing age)

Limitations

This report is based on laboratory-based surveillance of laboratory-confirmed cases. The number of reported cases is heavily dependent on testing practices. Although trends over time and comparisons by geographic area are presented in this report, changes in testing practices over time or differences by region may partially explain the results. The crude CFR reported here is subject to numerous limitations: it is likely to be an underestimation as reporting of deaths may be delayed and deaths which occurred outside health facilities may be missed. Differences in health-seeking behaviour by age group and sex could also contribute to observed differences in case numbers between groups. The reported doubling time estimates are affected by the number of tests conducted; if fewer tests are performed, this will also increase the doubling time estimate. Delays in reporting may result in incomplete data for recent weeks, leading to an apparent reduction in number of cases.

Conclusions

To date, 1 575 471 cases, including 54 148 deaths have been reported. Following the decline in number of new cases after the second wave peak, the sporadic increases in number of new cases and weekly incidence risk reported across the provinces from week 10 of 2021 is possibly due to community transmission or localised outbreaks/clusters and congregation/ movement of people. The increasing trend in number of cases and incidence risk reported in Northern Cape and Free State provinces in the past three weeks continued. The decrease in weekly incidence in other provinces in the past week is possibly due to delays in reporting. Individual clusters are investigated by local epidemiologic teams. Demographic trends have remained unchanged in this reporting period, children aged <10 years had the lowest incidence risk and individuals aged 40-59 years had the highest incidence. Ongoing monitoring of case numbers is important following the Easter Festive Period where there may have been increased social mixing associated with SARS-CoV-2 transmission. In addition, number of confirmed cases diagnosed on antigen tests may be underestimated as they are used in a number of different settings and results may not be fully reported yet.