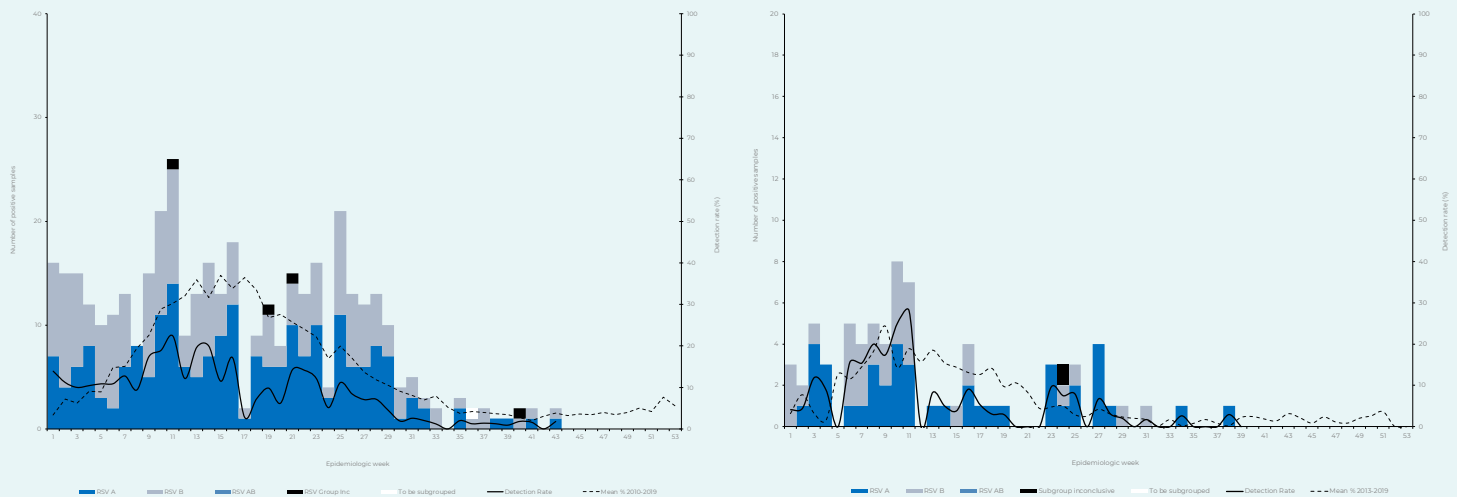


SEASONAL DISEASES

# Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) 2021 - RSV activity remains low

As of week 45 2021 (week ending 14 November 2021), 482 RSV cases have been detected at pneumonia and ILI surveillance sentinel sites. The majority of RSV positive cases were subgroup A (255/482, 52.9%), followed by subgroup B (221/482, 45.9%).

The detection rate continues to decrease these past few weeks to rates below 10% since week 26 (Figure 5).



**Figure 5.** Number of samples testing positive for respiratory syncytial virus by subgroup and detection rate by week for pneumonia surveillance (left) and ILI surveillance (right), 01 January – 14 November 2021

**Source:** Centre for Respiratory Diseases and Meningitis, NICD-NHLS; cherylc@nicd.ac.za

## Malaria

The southern African malaria season has started and the number of cases is expected to rise following the onset of summer rains. The numbers of reported malaria cases are, however, still comparatively low compared to previous years. It is important to note that many of the variables that contribute to malaria incidence are unstable or unpredictable - these include climatic, economic and political factors, and the state of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, and so the rate of incidence can increase substantially in a short period of time. People intending to visit malaria risk areas should therefore familiarise themselves with malaria-preventive measures ([https://www.nicd.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/National-Guidelines-for-prevention-of-Malaria\\_updated-08012019-1.pdf](https://www.nicd.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/National-Guidelines-for-prevention-of-Malaria_updated-08012019-1.pdf)). While COVID-19 is often the main concern when a person becomes

ill with non-specific symptoms, it is also important to remind healthcare workers of the need to consider malaria in a febrile patient living in or travelling from a malaria-endemic region. Missed or delayed recognition of malaria has the potential for serious illness or death. Any person presenting with fever and progressive 'flu-like symptoms who lives in, or has recently visited, a malaria-endemic area, should be checked for malaria, irrespective of pending or completed tests for SARS-CoV-2 infection. The ability of vector mosquitoes to hitchhike to non-malaria areas and infect local residents, frequently with serious medical consequences, also should not be forgotten. This type of malaria should be considered in a patient with a progressively worsening febrile illness of unknown cause, particularly if thrombocytopenia is evident.

**Source:** Centre for Emerging Zoonotic and Parasitic Diseases, NICD-NHLS; johnf@nicd.ac.za / basilb@nicd.ac.za