

# WEEKLY RESPIRATORY PATHOGENS SURVEILLANCE REPORT

SOUTH AFRICA WEEK 49 2021

 NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNICABLE DISEASES  
Division of the National Health Laboratory Service

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## CUMULATIVE DATA FROM



## HIGHLIGHTS: WEEK 49

- The 2021 influenza season has not yet started although sustained detections of influenza continue in all surveillance programmes. In week 49, transmission is below threshold and impact is low.

- 17 new cases of influenza from Western Cape (n=9), Mpumalanga (n=3) and Kwa-Zulu Natal (n=5) surveillance sites were detected in week 49. To date, 422 influenza cases have been detected from Gauteng, Western Cape, North West, Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal sentinel surveillance sites. From 1 January 2021 to date, influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 was the most commonly detected subtype in both influenza-like illness (ILI) surveillance (n=56/164, 34%) and pneumonia surveillance (n=63/199, 32%).

- RSV activity remains below seasonal threshold in both ILI and pneumonia surveillance programmes. From 1 January 2021 to date, RSV subgroup A was the most commonly detected subgroup in both ILI surveillance (n=42/74, 57%) and pneumonia surveillance (n=216/412, 52%).

- From 2 March 2020 to date, a total of 3 023 COVID-19 cases were detected from all surveillance programmes. A decrease in detection rate of COVID-19 cases has been noted in both pneumonia surveillance and ILI in week 49. Of the 2 084 hospitalised COVID-19 cases reported with available data on outcome, 360 (17%) died.

- From 1 January 2021 to date, of the 1229/1800 (68%) SARS-CoV-2 positive cases with variant type results, Delta (444/899, 50%) and Beta (157/327, 48%), were the most detected variants in pneumonia surveillance and in ILI, respectively. Delta variant predominated in both programmes (from week 22, week starting 31st May 2021 until week 46). Beta variant predominated from week 47 of 2020 to week 21 of 2021. Omicron has been detected from week 46 in pneumonia surveillance (6/899, 1%) and from week 47 in ILI (3/330, 1%).

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

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## 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	<p><b>ILI:</b> An acute respiratory illness with a temperature (<math>\geq 38^{\circ}\text{C}</math>) and cough, &amp; onset <math>\leq 10</math> days</p> <p><b>Suspected pertussis</b> Any person with an acute cough illness lasting <math>\geq 14</math> days (or cough illness of any duration for children <math>&lt; 1</math> year), without a more likely diagnosis AND one or more of the following signs or symptoms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• paroxysms of coughing,</li> <li>• or inspiratory “whoop”,</li> <li>• or post-tussive vomiting</li> <li>• or apnoea in children <math>&lt; 1</math> year;</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <p>Any person in whom a clinician suspects pertussis</p> <p><b>Suspected SARS-CoV-2</b> Any person presenting with an acute (<math>\leq 14</math> days) respiratory tract infection or other clinical illness compatible with COVID-19<sup>§</sup></p>	<p><b>ILI:</b> An acute respiratory illness with a temperature (<math>\geq 38^{\circ}\text{C}</math>) and cough, &amp; onset <math>\leq 10</math> days</p> <p><b>Suspected SARS-CoV-2</b> Any person presenting with an acute (<math>\leq 14</math> days) respiratory tract infection or other clinical illness compatible with COVID-19<sup>§</sup></p>	<p><b>SRI:</b> Acute (symptom onset <math>\leq 10</math> days) or chronic (symptom onset <math>&gt; 10</math>) lower respiratory tract infection</p> <p><b>Suspected pertussis</b> Any person with an acute cough illness lasting <math>\geq 14</math> days (or cough illness of any duration for children <math>&lt; 1</math> year), without a more likely diagnosis AND one or more of the following signs or symptoms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• paroxysms of coughing,</li> <li>• or inspiratory “whoop”,</li> <li>• or post-tussive vomiting</li> <li>• or apnoea in children <math>&lt; 1</math> year;</li> </ul> <p>OR</p> <p>Any person in whom a clinician suspects pertussis.</p> <p><b>Suspected SARS-CoV-2</b> Any person admitted with a physician-diagnosis of suspected COVID-19 and not meeting SRI case definition.</p>
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
Testing Methods	<p><b>INF and RSV</b> - Fast-Track Diagnostics multiplex real-time reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (until 31 March 2021)</p> <p><b>B. pertussis</b> Multiplex real-time PCR (Tatti <i>et al.</i>, <i>J Clin Microbiol</i> 2011) and culture (if PCR cycle threshold <math>\leq 25</math>)</p> <p><b>SARS-CoV-2</b> 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021: Roche E gene real-time PCR essay (Corman <i>et al.</i>, <i>Euro Surv</i> 2020) 1 April 2021 to date: Allplex™ SARS-CoV-2/FluA/FluB/RSV PCR kit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• positivity assigned if PCR cycle threshold is <math>&lt; 40</math> for <math>\geq 1</math> gene targets (N, S, OR RdRp)</li> </ul>	<p><b>INF and RSV</b> - Fast-Track Diagnostics multiplex real-time reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (until 31 March 2021)</p> <p><b>B. pertussis</b> Multiplex real-time PCR (Tatti <i>et al.</i>, <i>J Clin Microbiol</i> 2011) and culture (if PCR cycle threshold <math>\leq 25</math>)</p> <p><b>SARS-CoV-2</b> 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021: Roche E gene real-time PCR essay (Corman <i>et al.</i>, <i>Euro Surv</i> 2020) 1 April 2021 to date: Allplex™ SARS-CoV-2/FluA/FluB/RSV PCR kit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• positivity assigned if PCR cycle threshold is <math>&lt; 40</math> for <math>\geq 1</math> gene targets (N, S, OR RdRp)</li> </ul>	<p><b>INF and RSV</b> - Fast Track Diagnostics multiplex real-time reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (until 31 March 2021)</p> <p><b>B. pertussis</b> Multiplex real-time PCR (Tatti <i>et al.</i>, <i>J Clin Microbiol</i> 2011) and culture (if PCR cycle threshold <math>\leq 25</math>)</p> <p><b>SARS-CoV-2</b> 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021: Roche E gene real-time PCR essay (Corman <i>et al.</i>, <i>Euro Surv</i> 2020) 1 April 2021 to date: Allplex™ SARS-CoV-2/FluA/FluB/RSV PCR kit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• positivity assigned if PCR cycle threshold is <math>&lt; 40</math> for <math>\geq 1</math> gene targets (N, S, OR RdRp)</li> </ul>

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

WEEK 49 2021

## 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

§Symptoms include ANY of the following respiratory symptoms: cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, anosmia (loss of sense of smell) or dysgeusia (alteration of the sense of taste), with or without other symptoms (which may include fever, weakness, myalgia, or diarrhoea). Testing for SARS-CoV-2 was initiated in all three surveillance programmes in week 10 of 2020 (week starting 2 March 2020).

## COMMENTS

### Influenza

The 2021 influenza season has not yet started although sustained detections of influenza continue in all surveillance programmes. Since the first influenza positive case of 2021 was detected in pneumonia surveillance in week 9 of 2021 (week ending on the 07 March 2021), sporadic cases have been reported from week 16 to date. Of the 422 influenza cases detected in surveillance sites in 2021, the majority (n=133, 32%) were influenza A(H1N1)pdm09. In week 49, transmission is below threshold and impact is low.

**ILI programme:** In 2021 to date, specimens from 1 897 patients meeting ILI case definition were received from 4 ILI sites. Influenza was detected in 164 (9%) patients, of which 56 (34%) were influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, 19 (12%) influenza A(H3N2), three (2%) influenza A(inconclusive), 40 (24%) influenza A(pending subtype results), 38 (23%) influenza B(Victoria), four (2%) influenza B(lineage inconclusive) and four (2%) influenza B(lineage pending). (Fig1, Table1).

**Viral Watch programme:** In 2021 to date, specimens were received from 243 patients from Viral Watch sites in 6 of the 8 provinces participating in surveillance. Influenza was detected in 34 (14%) patients, of which 10 (29%) were influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, five (15%) influenza A(H3N2), eight (24%) influenza A(pending results), eight (24%) influenza B(Victoria) and three (9%) influenza B(lineage inconclusive). (Fig7, Table5)

**Pneumonia surveillance:** Since the beginning of 2021, specimens from 5 905 patients with severe respiratory illness (SRI) were received from the 6 sentinel sites. Influenza was detected in 199 (3%) patients, of which 63 (32%) were influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, 29 (15%) influenza A(H3N2), five (3%) influenza A(subtype inconclusive), 43 (22%) influenza A(pending subtype results), 49 (25%) influenza B(Victoria), seven (4%) were influenza B(lineage inconclusive) and three (2%) influenza B(lineage pending results). (Fig12, Table9)

In addition, influenza was detected in 25 (3%) of 857 specimens, of which four (16%) were influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, three (12%) influenza A (subtype pending results), 17 (68%) influenza B(Victoria) and one (5%) was influenza B(lineage inconclusive) from patients who met suspected SARS-CoV-2 case definition but did not meet pneumonia/ILI surveillance case definition.

### Respiratory syncytial virus

In 2021 to date, RSV detection has been reported from all surveillance programmes, activity remains below seasonal threshold. Of the 513 RSV cases detected in 2021, the majority (n=268, 52%) were RSV subgroup A.

**ILI programme:** In 2021 to date, 1 897 specimens from patients meeting the ILI case definition were tested and RSV was detected in 74 (4%) patients. Of which, 42 (57%) were RSV subgroup A, 31 (42%) RSV subgroup B and one (1%) was RSV (subgroup inconclusive). (Fig4, Table2)

**Viral Watch programme:** In 2021 to date, 243 specimens from viral watch patients were tested and RSV was detected in specimens of six (3%) patients. Of which, three (50%) were RSV subgroup A, two (33%) RSV subgroup B and one (17%) was RSV (subgroup inconclusive). (Fig9, Table6)

**Pneumonia surveillance:** Since the beginning of 2021, 5 905 specimens were tested and RSV was detected in specimens of 412 (7%) patients. Of which, 216 (52%) were RSV subgroup A, 190 (46%) RSV subgroup B, five (1%) RSV (subgroup inconclusive) and one (1%) RSV (subgroup pending results). (Fig14, Table10)

In addition, RSV was detected in 21 of 857 (2%) specimens, of which seven (33%) were RSV subgroup A, 13 (62%) RSV subgroup B and one (5%) was RSV (subgroup inconclusive) from patients who met suspected SARS-CoV-2 case definition but did not meet pneumonia/ILI surveillance case definition.

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

**ILI programme:** From March 2020 to date, 3 211 patients were tested and SARS-CoV-2 was detected in 596 (19%) patients. From 1 January 2021 to date, of the 330/463 (71%) with data on variant type, majority (157/330, 48%) were Beta variant which predominated from week1 to week 24, followed by Delta (145/330, 44%) variant which predominated from week 25 to week 40. Omicron has been detected from week47 (3/330, 1%). (Fig6, Table4)

**Viral Watch programme:** From March 2020 to date, 522 patients presenting with ILI were tested and SARS-CoV-2 was detected in 95 (18%) patients. From 1 January 2021, of the 21/95 (23%) with data on variant type, majority were (19/21, 90%) were Delta variant which dominated from week 25 to week 30. (Fig11, Table8)

**Pneumonia surveillance:** From March 2020 to date, 9 920 patients with severe respiratory illness (SRI) were tested and SARS-CoV-2 was detected in 2 112 (21%) patients. From 1 January 2021 to date, of the 899/1337 (67%) with data on variant type, majority were (444/899, 49.8%) were Delta variant which dominated from week 22 to week 46 followed by Beta (403/899, 45%) variant which dominated from week 1 to 25. Omicron has been detected from week46 (6/899, 1%). (Fig17, Table12)

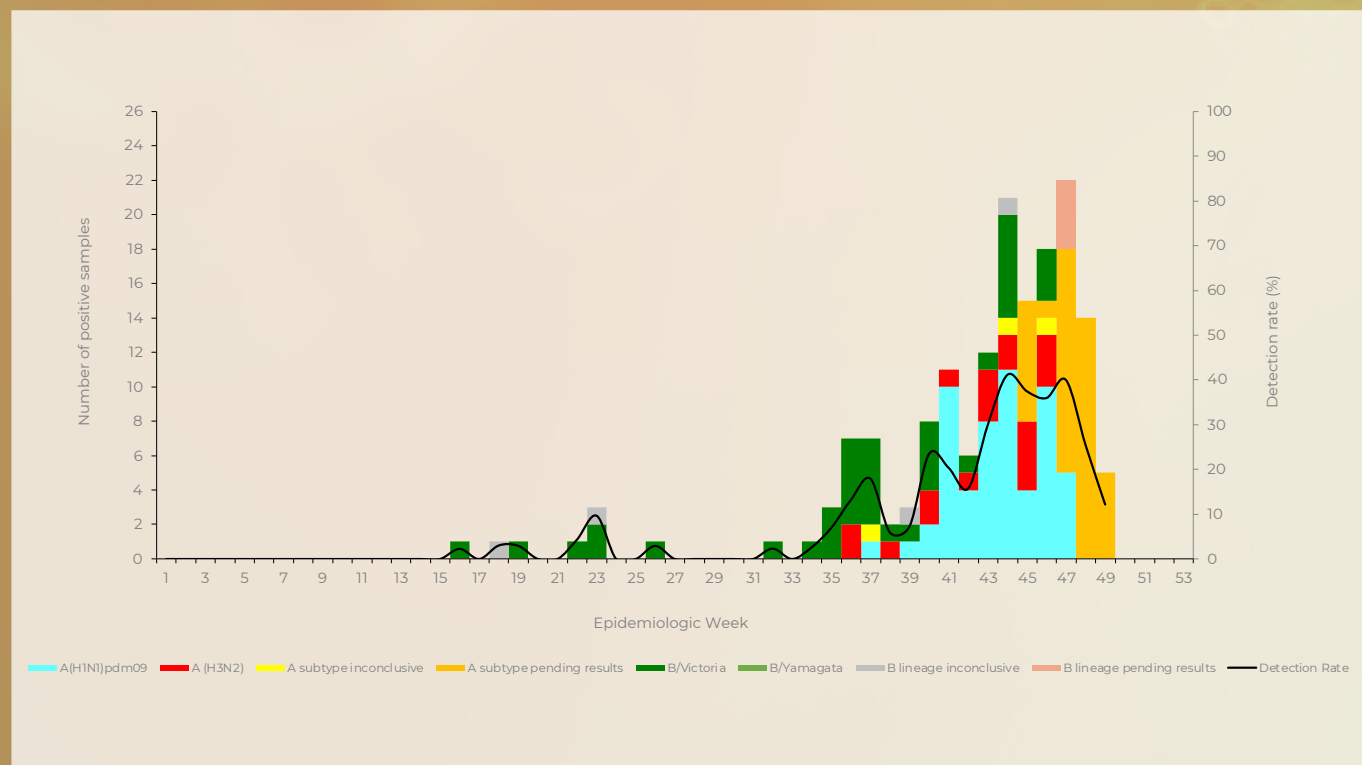
In addition, SARS-CoV-2 was detected in 220 of 1060 (21%) specimens from patients who met suspected SARS-CoV-2 case definition but did not meet the pneumonia/ILI surveillance case definitions.



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

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



**Figure 1.** Number of influenza positive cases\* by influenza subtype and lineage\*\* and detection rate\*\*\* by week, Influenza-like illness (ILI) surveillance in primary health care clinics, 04/01/2021 – 12/12/2021

\*Specimens from patients with influenza-like illnesses at 5 sentinel sites in 4 provinces

\*\*Influenza was detected in 18 (3%) of 639 specimens from patients who met suspected SARS-CoV-2 case definition but did not meet Influenza-like illness (ILI) case definition. These are not included in the epidemiological curve.

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

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

**Table 1.** Number of laboratory confirmed influenza cases by subtype and lineage\*\* and total number of samples tested by clinic and province, Influenza-like illness (ILI) surveillance in primary health care clinics, 04/01/2021 – 12/12/2021

Clinic (Province)	A(H1N1) pdm09	A(H3N2)	A subtype inconclusive	A subtype pending results <sup>§</sup>	B/ Victoria	B/ Yamagata	B lineage inconclusive	B lineage pending results <sup>§</sup>	Total samples
Agincourt (MP)	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	245
Eastridge (WC)	2	6	0	8	6	0	0	1	253
Edendale Gateway (KZ)	1	1	0	7	15	0	3	1	281
Jouberton (NW)	43	5	1	3	13	0	0	0	793
Mitchell's Plain (WC)	5	5	1	21	4	0	1	2	325
<b>Total:</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1 897</b>

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

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

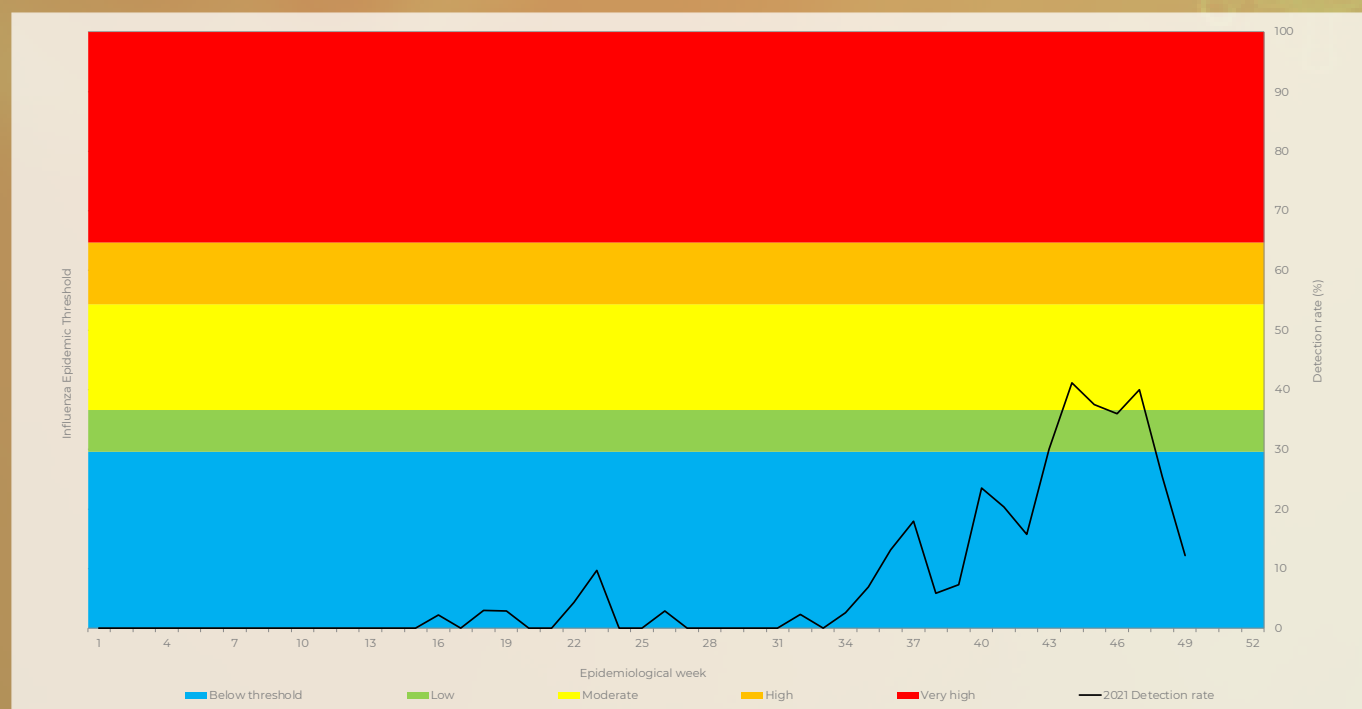
\*\*Influenza was detected in 18 (3%) of 639 specimens from patients who met suspected SARS-CoV-2 case definition but did not meet Influenza-like illness (ILI) case definition. These are not included in the table.

<sup>§</sup>Influenza A subtype or B lineage results are pending

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

WEEK 49 2021

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



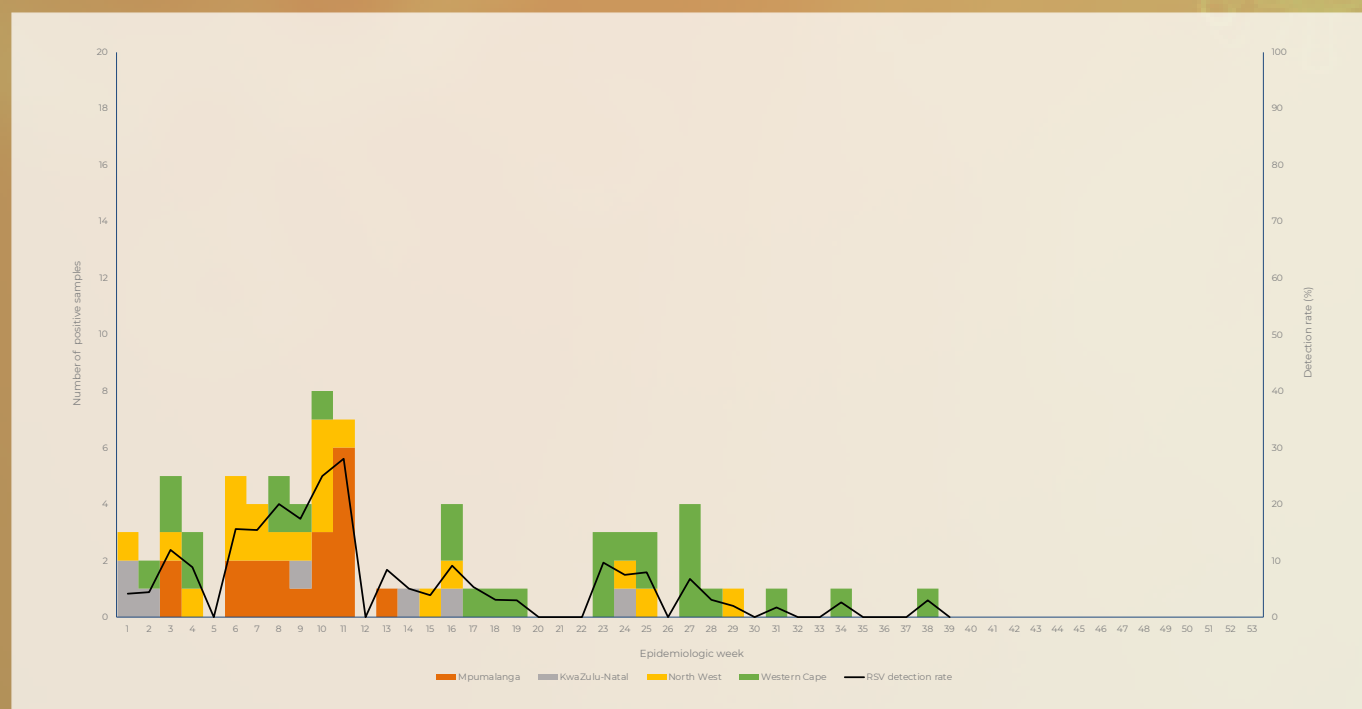
**Figure 2.** Influenza percentage detections and epidemic thresholds\*, Influenza-like illness (ILI) surveillance in primary health care clinics, 04/01/2021 – 12/12/2021

\*Thresholds based on 2012-2019 data

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

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



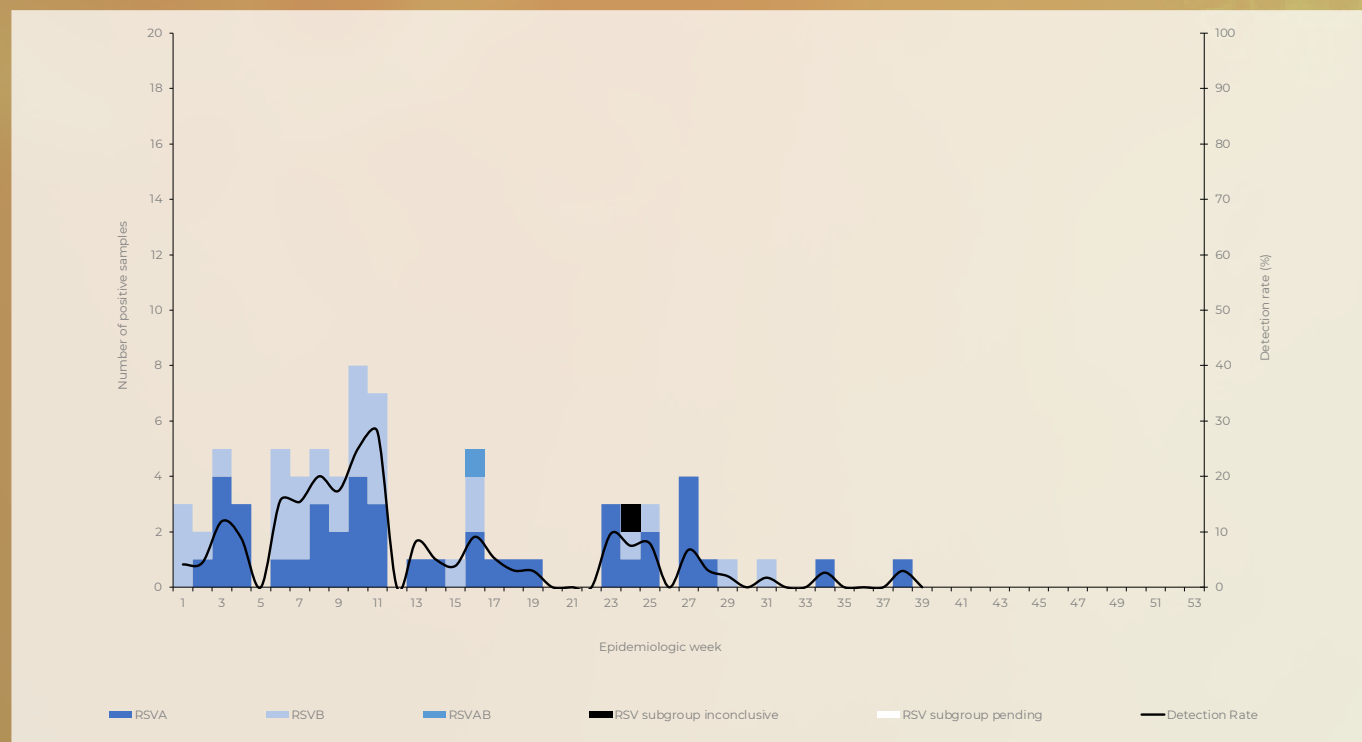
**Figure 3.** Number of patients testing positive for respiratory syncytial virus\* by province and detection rate\*\* by week, Influenza-like illness (ILI) surveillance in primary health care clinics, 04/01/2021 – 12/12/2021

\*\*RSV was detected from 15 of 639 (2%) specimens from patients who met suspected SARS-CoV-2 case definition but did not meet influenza-like illness (ILI) case definition. These are not included in the epidemiological curve.

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

WEEK 49 2021

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



**Figure 4.** Number of patients testing positive for respiratory syncytial virus\*\* by subgroup and detection rate by week, Influenza-like illness (ILI) surveillance in primary health care clinics, 04/01/2021 – 12/12/2021

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

\*\*RSV was detected from 15 of 639 (2%) specimens from patients who met suspected SARS-CoV-2 case definition but did not meet influenza-like illness (ILI) case definition. These are not included in the epidemiological curve.

**Table 2.** Number of patients testing positive for respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) by subgroups\*\* identified and total number of samples tested by clinic and province, Influenza-like illness (ILI) surveillance in primary health care clinics, 04/01/2021 – 12/12/2021

Clinic (Province)	RSVA	RSVB	RSVAB	RSV subgroup inconclusive	RSV subgroup pending*	Total samples
Agincourt (MP)	12	7	0	0	0	245
Eastridge (WC)	24	1	0	0	0	253
Edendale Gateway (KZ)	1	6	0	0	0	281
Jouberton (NW)	2	17	0	1	0	793
Mitchell's Plain (WC)	3	0	0	0	0	325
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1 897</b>

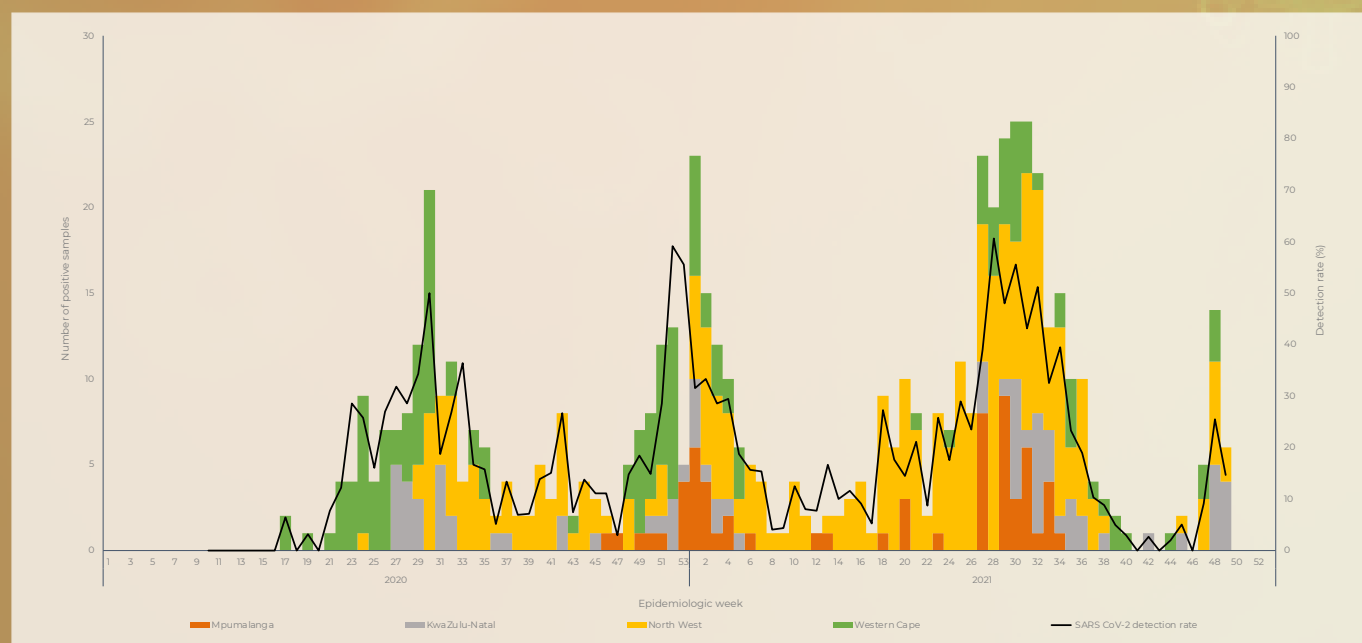
KZ: KwaZulu-Natal; NW: North West; WC: Western Cape; MP: Mpumalanga  
Inconclusive: insufficient viral load in sample and unable to characterise further  
RSV AB: Both RSV A and B subgroup identified  
\*RSV results for subgroups are pending

\*\*RSV was detected from 15 of 639 (2%) specimens from patients who met suspected SARS-CoV-2 case definition but did not meet influenza-like illness (ILI) case definition. These are not included in the table.

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

WEEK 49 2021

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



**Figure 5.** Number of patients testing positive for SARS-CoV-2\* by province and detection rate by week, Influenza-like illness (ILI) surveillance in primary health care clinics, 02/03/2020 – 12/12/2021

\*Specimens from patients with influenza-like illnesses at 5 sentinel sites in 4 provinces

\*\*SARS-CoV-2 was detected in 150 of 771 (19%) specimens from patients who met suspected SARS-CoV-2 case definition but did not meet influenza-like illness (ILI) case definition. These are not included in the epidemiological curve.

**Table 3.** Number of patients positive for SARS-CoV-2 identified and total number of samples tested by clinic and province, Influenza-like illness (ILI) surveillance primary health care clinics, 02/03/2020 – 12/12/2021

Clinic (Province)	SARS-CoV-2 positive	Total samples tested
Agincourt (MP)	62	275
Eastridge (WC)	60	742
Edendale Gateway (KZ)	79	424
Jouberton (NW)	300	1116
Mitchell's Plain (WC)	95	654
<b>Total:</b>	<b>596</b>	<b>3 211</b>

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

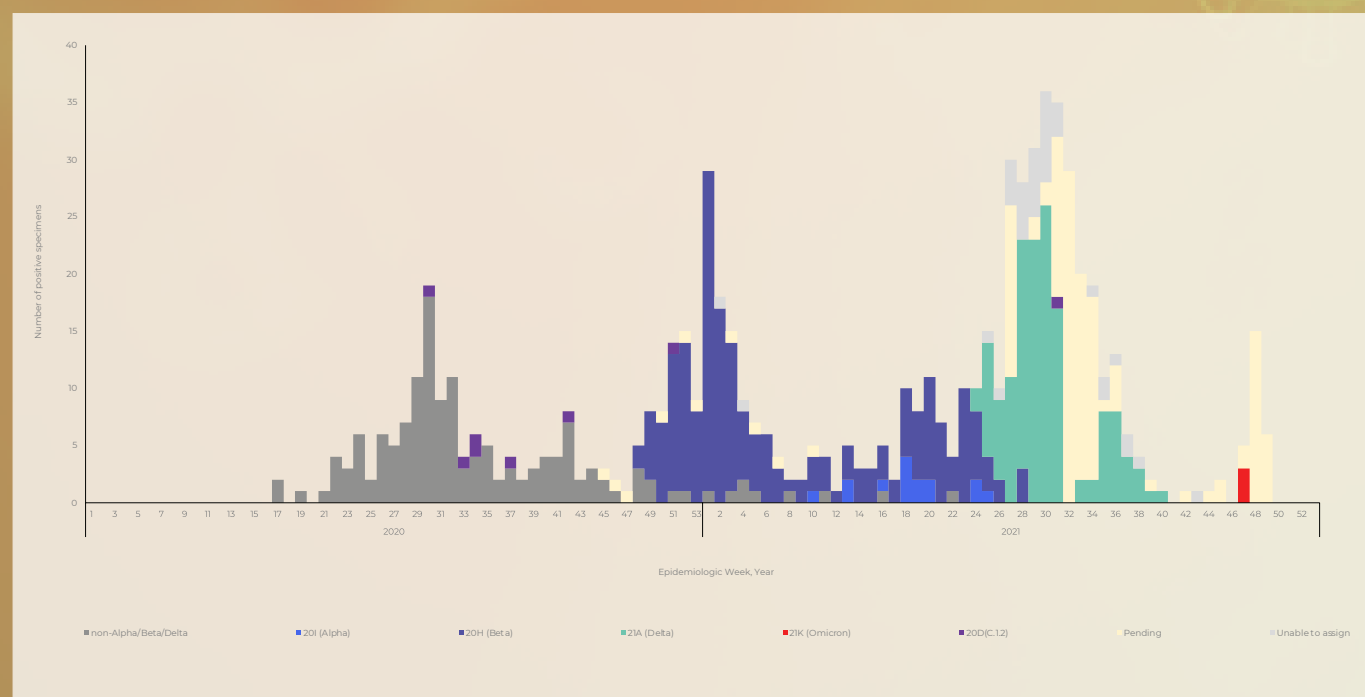
\*\*SARS-CoV-2 was detected in 150 of 771 (19%) specimens from patients who met suspected SARS-CoV-2 case definition but did not meet influenza-like illness (ILI) case definition. These are not included in the table.



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

WEEK 49 2021

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



**Figure 6.** Number and detection rate of laboratory confirmed SARS-CoV-2\* cases by variant type (variant PCR/sequencing) and week, Influenza-like illness (ILI) surveillance in primary health care clinics, 02/03/2020 – 12/12/2021

\*Specimens are from patients with influenza-like illness at 5 sentinel sites in 4 provinces who met suspected SARS-CoV-2 case definition and met pneumonia (SRI) case definition as well as those that did not meet the ILI case definition.

**Unable to assign:** no lineage assigned due to poor- sequence quality OR low viral load (ct=>35) OR variant PCR could not assign variant and no sequencing result

**Pending:** outstanding variant results

**Table 4.** Number of SARS-CoV-2\* positive cases by variant (variant PCR and/or sequencing) identified and total number of samples tested by clinic and province, Influenza-like illness (ILI) surveillance primary health care clinics, 02/03/2020 – 12/12/2021

Clinic (Province)	Non-Alpha/Beta/Delta	20I (Alpha)	20H (Beta)	21A (Delta)	20D (C.1.2)	21K (Omicron)	Pending	Unable to assign	Total SARS-CoV-2 positive
Agincourt (MP)	4	0	29	19	0	0	29	2	83
Eastridge (WC)	20	0	19	7	0	0	5	2	53
Edendale Gateway (KZ)	27	0	24	32	1	0	31	5	120
Jouberton (NW)	61	15	105	74	7	3	63	24	352
Mitchell's Plain (WC)	35	0	28	13	0	0	11	5	92
<b>Total:</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>700</b>

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

\*Specimens are from patients with influenza-like illness at 5 sentinel sites in 4 provinces who met suspected SARS-CoV-2 case definition and met pneumonia (SRI) case definition as well as those that did not meet the ILI case definition.

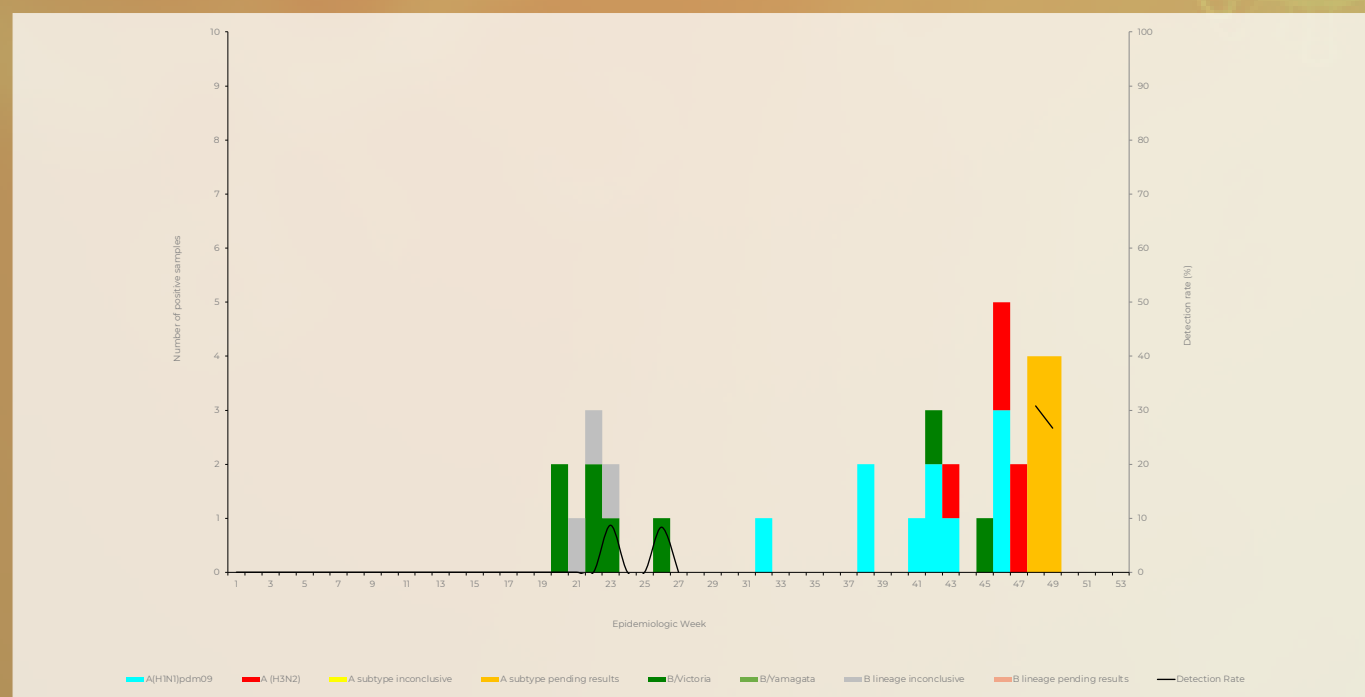
**Unable to assign:** no lineage assigned due to poor- sequence quality OR low viral load (ct=>35) OR variant PCR could not assign variant and no sequencing result

**Pending:** outstanding variant results

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

WEEK 49 2021

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



**Figure 7.** Number of positive patients\* by influenza subtype and lineage and detection rate\*\* by week, ILI surveillance - Viral Watch, 04/01/2021 – 12/12/2021

\*Specimens from patients with Influenza-like illnesses at 90 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 5.** Number of laboratory confirmed influenza cases by influenza subtype and lineage and total number of samples tested by province, ILI surveillance - Viral Watch, 04/01/2021 – 12/12/2021

Province	A(H1N1)pdm09	A(H3N2)	A subtype inconclusive	A subtype pending results*	B/Victoria	B/Yamagata	B lineage inconclusive	B lineage pending results*	Total samples
Eastern Cape	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	4
Free State	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Gauteng	6	2	0	1	5	0	3	0	176
Limpopo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mpumalanga	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
North West	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Northern Cape	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Western Cape	3	3	0	7	1	0	0	0	54
<b>Total:</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>243</b>

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

\*Influenza A subtype or B lineage results are pending

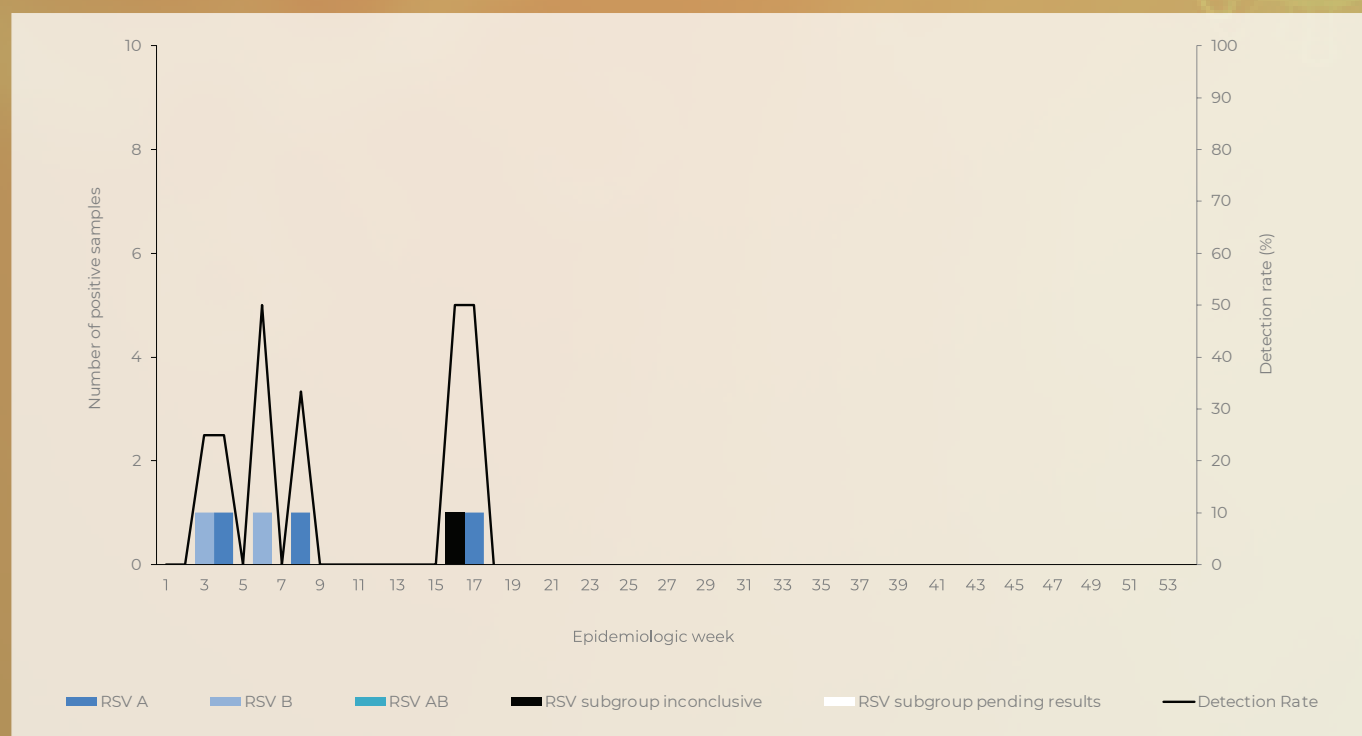
From 04 January 2021 to date, no patients were tested for influenza at the time of entry into South Africa following travel abroad.

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 49 2021

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



**Figure 8.** Number of RSV positive cases testing positive for respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)\* by subgroup and detection rate by week, ILI surveillance - Viral Watch, 04/01/2021 – 12/12/2021

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

\*RSV results for subgroups are pending

**Table 6.** Number of RSV positive cases identified and total number of samples tested by province, ILI surveillance - Viral Watch, 04/01/2021 – 12/12/2021

Province	RSV A	RSV B	RSV AB	RSV subgroup inconclusive**	RSV subgroup pending results*	Total samples tested
Eastern Cape	0	0	0	0	0	4
Free State	0	0	0	0	0	4
Gauteng	2	2	0	0	0	176
Limpopo	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mpumalanga	0	0	0	0	0	3
North West	0	0	0	0	0	2
Northern Cape	0	0	0	0	0	0
Western Cape	1	0	0	1	0	54
<b>Total:</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>243</b>

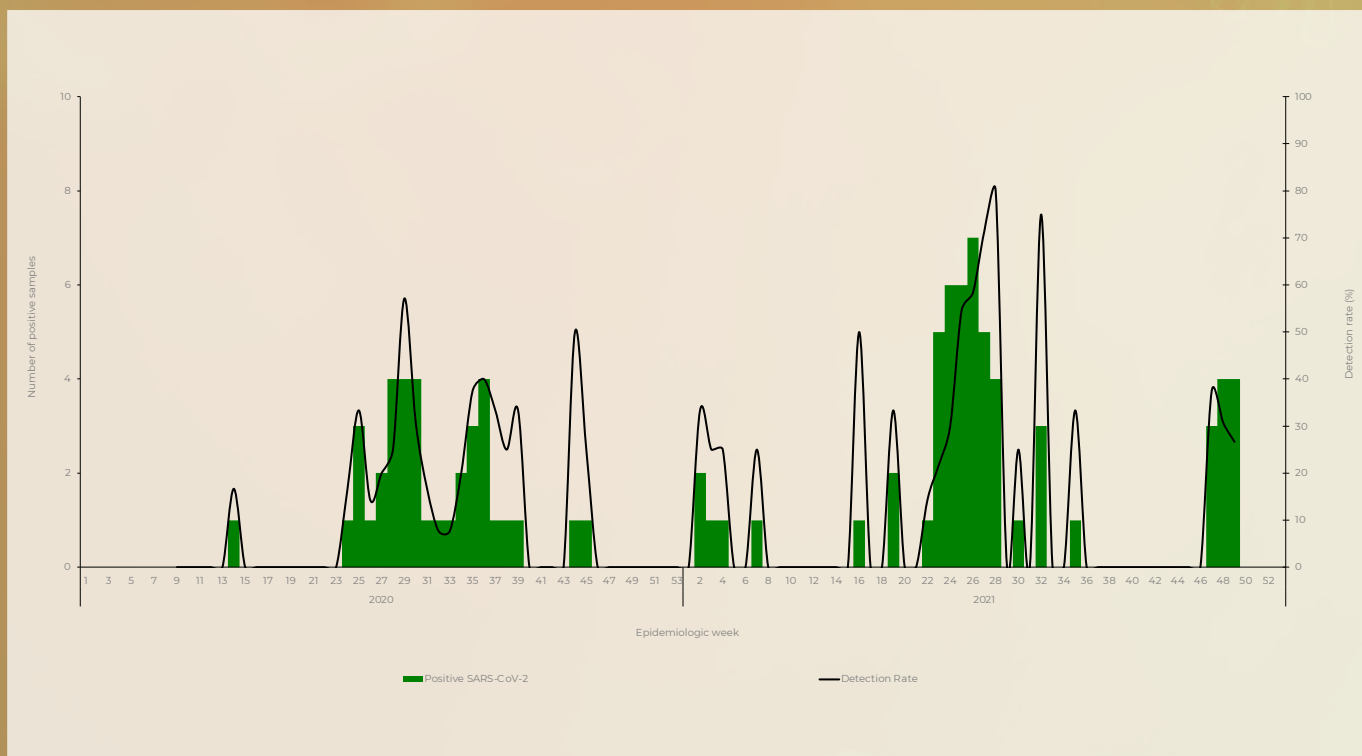
\*RSV results for subgroups are pending

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

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

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



**Figure 9.** Number of patients testing positive for SARS-CoV-2\*, by site and detection rate by week, ILI surveillance - Viral Watch, 02/03/2020 – 12/12/2021

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

**Table 7.** Number of SARS-CoV-2 positive cases identified and total number tested by province, ILI surveillance - Viral Watch, 02/03/2020 – 12/12/2021

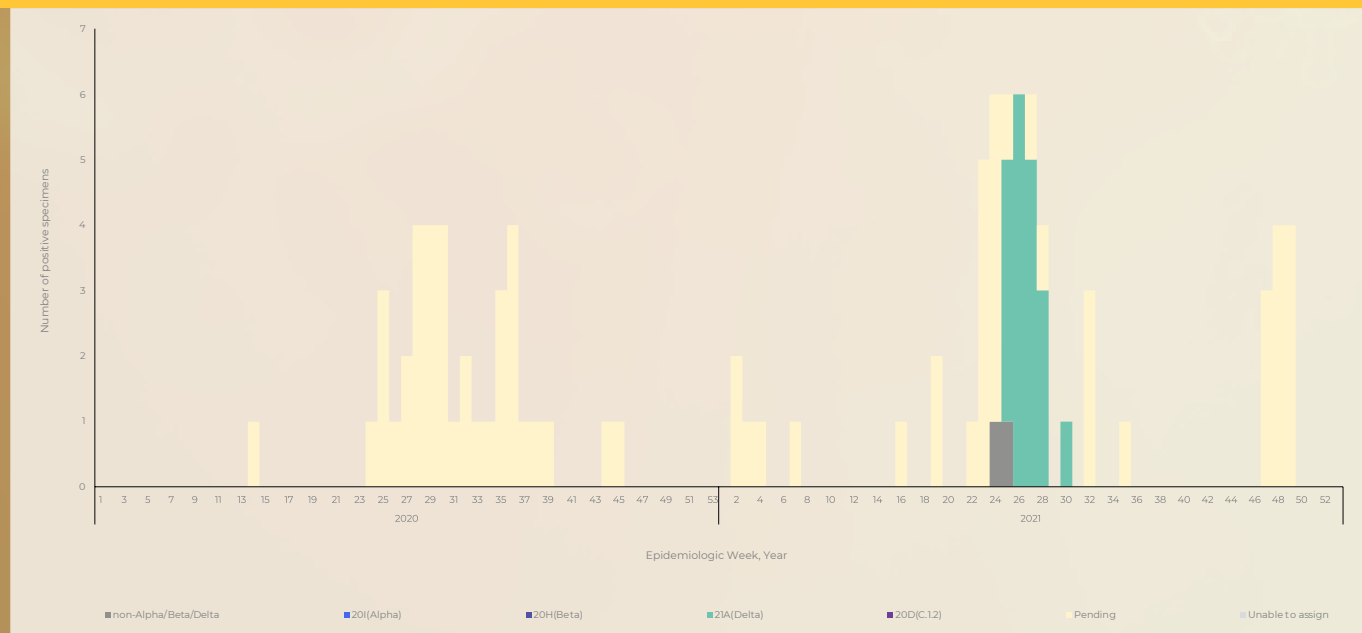
Province	SARS-CoV-2 positive	Total samples tested
Eastern Cape	1	8
Free State	1	18
Gauteng	70	336
Limpopo	0	2
Mpumalanga	1	8
North West	0	2
Northern Cape	0	2
Western Cape	22	146
<b>Total:</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>522</b>



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

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



**Figure 10.** Number and detection rate of laboratory confirmed SARS-CoV-2\* cases by variant type (variant PCR/sequencing) and week, ILI surveillance - Viral Watch, 02/03/2020 – 12/12/2021

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

**Unable to assign:** no lineage assigned due to poor- sequence quality OR low viral load (ct=>35) OR variant PCR could not assign variant and no sequencing result  
**Pending:** outstanding variant results

**Table 8.** Number of SARS-CoV-2\* positive cases by variant (variant PCR and/or sequencing) identified and total number of samples tested by province, ILI surveillance - Viral Watch, 02/03/2021 – 12/12/2021

Clinic (Province)	Non-Alpha/ Beta/Delta	20I (Alpha)	20H (Beta)	21A (Delta)	20D (C.1.2)	Pending	Unable to assign	Total SARS- CoV-2 positive
Eastern Cape	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Free State	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Gauteng	2	0	0	18	0	50	0	70
Limpopo	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mpumalanga	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
North West	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northern Cape	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Western Cape	0	0	0	1	0	21	0	22
<b>Total:</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>95</b>

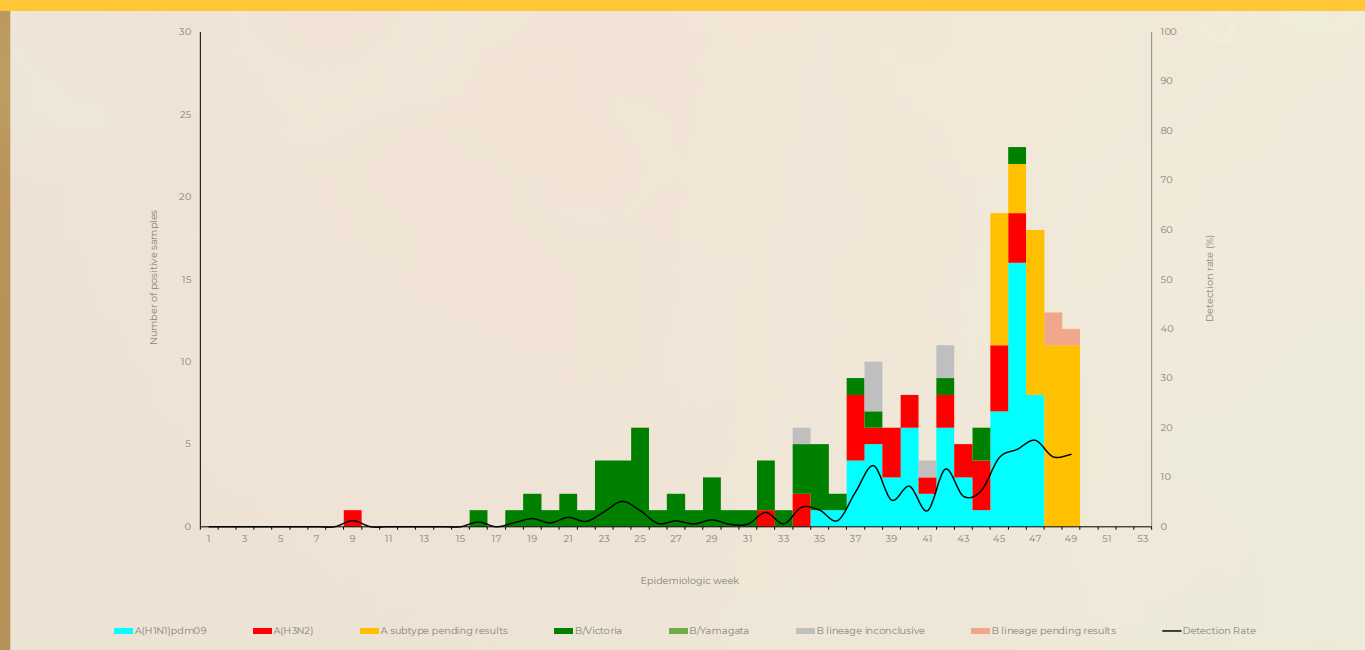
\*Specimens from patients with Influenza-like illnesses at 92 sentinel sites in 8 provinces

**Unable to assign:** no lineage assigned due to poor- sequence quality OR low viral load (ct=>35) OR variant PCR could not assign variant and no sequencing result  
**Pending:** outstanding variant results

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

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## NATIONAL SYNDROMIC SURVEILLANCE FOR PNEUMONIA



**Figure 11.** Number of positive influenza positive cases\* by influenza subtype and lineage\*\* and detection rate\*\*\* by week, pneumonia surveillance public hospitals, 04/01/2021 – 12/12/2021

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

\*\*Influenza was detected in seven (3%) of 218 specimens from patients who met suspected SARS-CoV-2 case definition but did not meet pneumonia (SRI) case definition. These are not included in the epidemiological curve.

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

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

**Table 9.** Number of laboratory confirmed influenza cases by subtype and lineage\*\* and total number of samples tested by hospital, pneumonia surveillance public hospitals, 04/01/2021 – 12/12/2021

Hospital (Province)	A(H1N1) pdm09	A(H3N2)	A subtype inconclusive	A subtype pending results***	B/ Victoria	B/ Yamagata	B lineage inconclusive	B lineage pending results***	Total samples
Edendale (KZ)	2	2	0	5	12	0	0	1	833
Helen Joseph-Rahima Moosa (GP)	23	14	2	1	17	0	5	0	1558
Klerksdorp-Tshepong (NW)	12	1	1	8	4	0	2	0	916
Mapulaneng-Matikwana (MP)	3	1	0	3	1	0	0	1	571
Red Cross (WC)	14	7	0	15	12	0	0	1	782
Mitchell's Plain (WC)	8	3	0	8	2	0	0	0	897
Tintswalo (MP)	1	1	2	3	1	0	0	0	248
<b>Total:</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5 905</b>

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

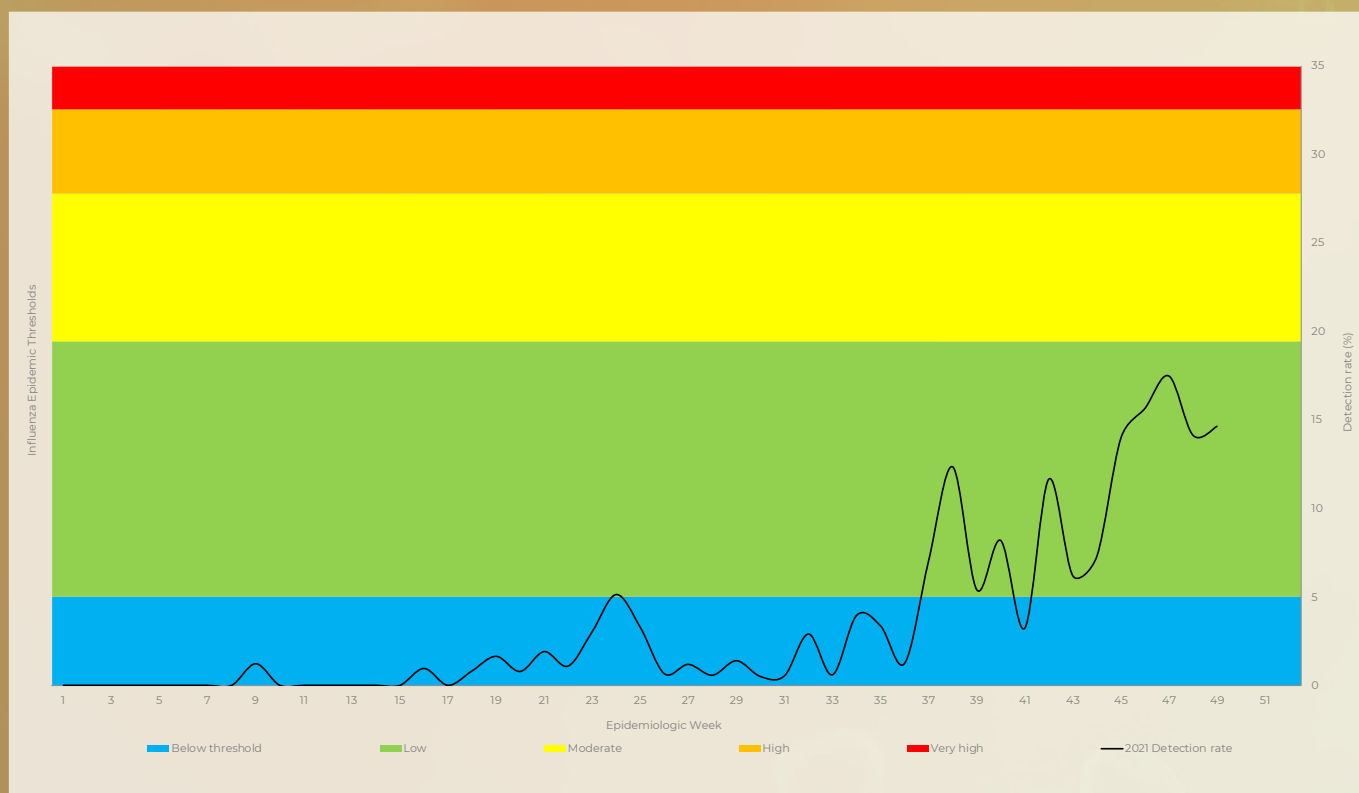
\*\*Influenza was detected in seven (3%) of 218 specimens from patients who met suspected SARS-CoV-2 case definition but did not meet pneumonia (SRI) case definition. These are not included in the table.

\*\*\*influenza A subtype or B lineage results are pending

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

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## NATIONAL SYNDROMIC SURVEILLANCE FOR PNEUMONIA



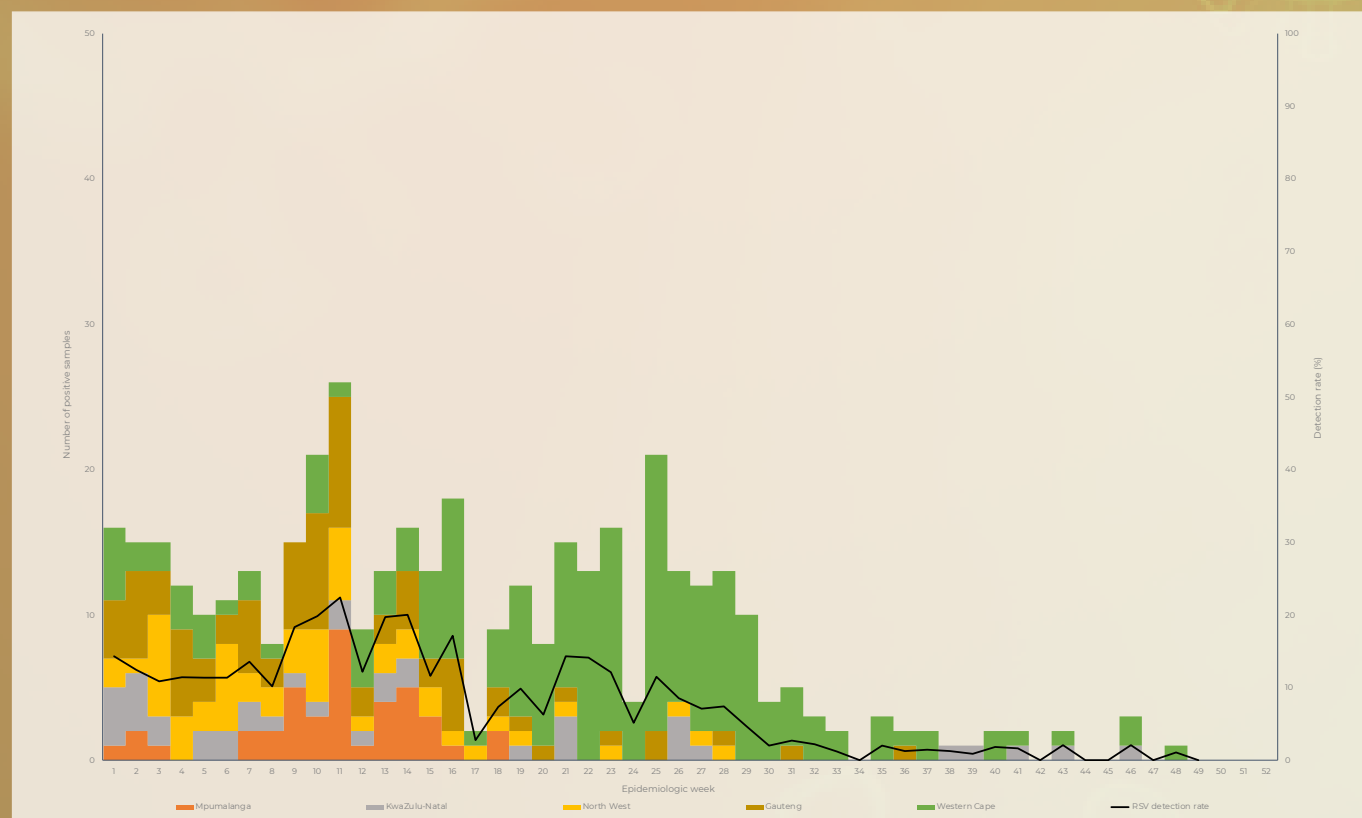
**Figure 12.** Influenza percentage detections and epidemic thresholds\*, pneumonia surveillance public hospitals, 04/01/2021 – 12/12/2021

\*Thresholds based on 2010-2019 data

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

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## NATIONAL SYNDROMIC SURVEILLANCE FOR PNEUMONIA



**Figure 13.** Number of patients testing positive for respiratory syncytial virus\* by province and detection rate by week, pneumonia surveillance public hospitals, 04/01/2021 – 12/12/2021

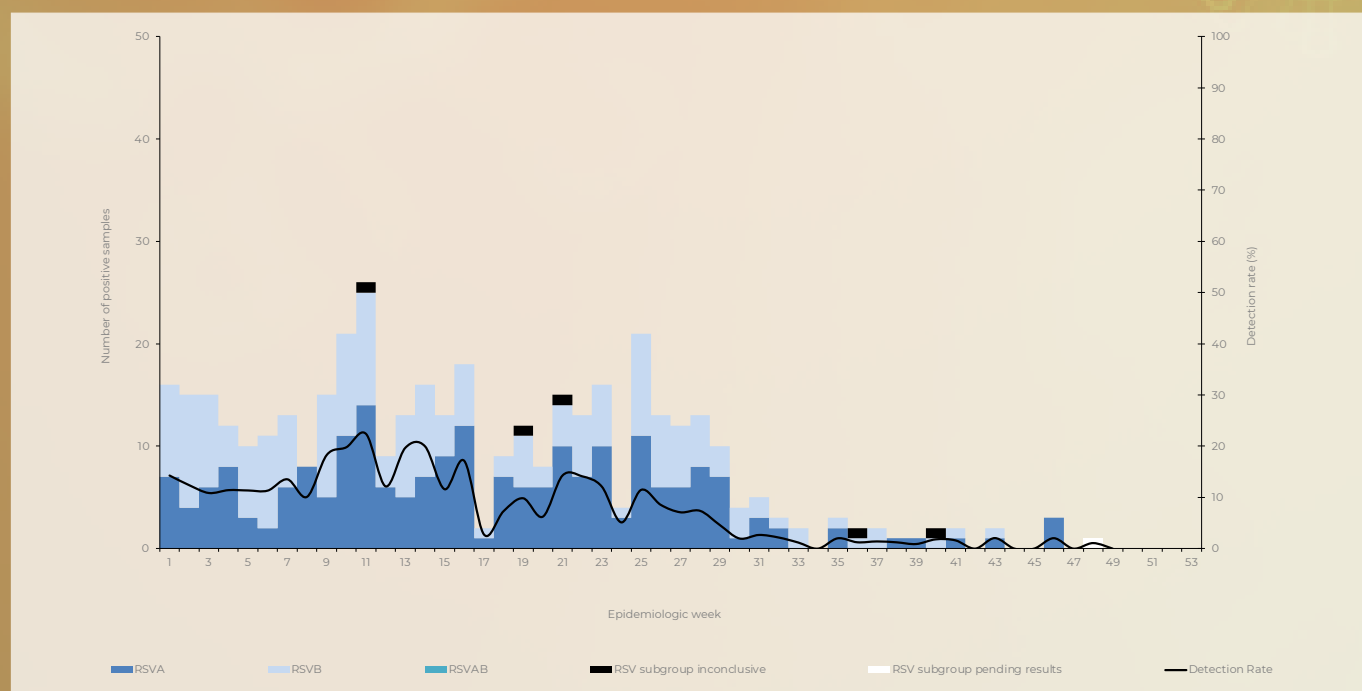
\*RSV was detected in six of 218 (3%) specimens from patients who met suspected SARS-CoV-2 case definition but did not meet pneumonia (SRI) case definition. These are not included in the epidemiological curve.



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

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## NATIONAL SYNDROMIC SURVEILLANCE FOR PNEUMONIA



**Figure 14.** Number of patients testing positive for respiratory syncytial virus\* by subgroup and detection rate by week, pneumonia surveillance public hospitals, 04/01/2021 – 12/12/2021

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

RSV AB: Both RSV A and B subgroup identified

RSV subgroup pending: RSV results for subgroups are pending

\*RSV was detected in six of 218 (3%) specimens from patients who met suspected SARS-CoV-2 case definition but did not meet pneumonia (SRI) case definition. These are not included in the epidemiological curve.

**Table 10:** Number of patients positive for respiratory syncytial virus subgroups\*\* by subgroups identified and total number of samples tested by hospital, pneumonia surveillance public hospitals, 04/01/2021 – 12/12/2021

Hospital (Province)	RSVA	RSVB	RSVAB	RSV subgroup inconclusive	RSV subgroup pending*	Total samples
Edendale (KZ)	10	29	0	0	0	933
Helen Joseph-Rahima Moosa (GP)	37	42	0	1	0	1558
Klerksdorp-Tshepong (NW)	8	45	0	1	0	916
Mapulaneng-Matikwana (MP)	21	7	0	0	0	571
Red Cross (WC)	88	51	0	2	1	782
Mitchell's Plain (WC)	42	13	0	1	0	897
Tintswalo (MP)	10	3	0	0	0	248
<b>Total:</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5 905</b>

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

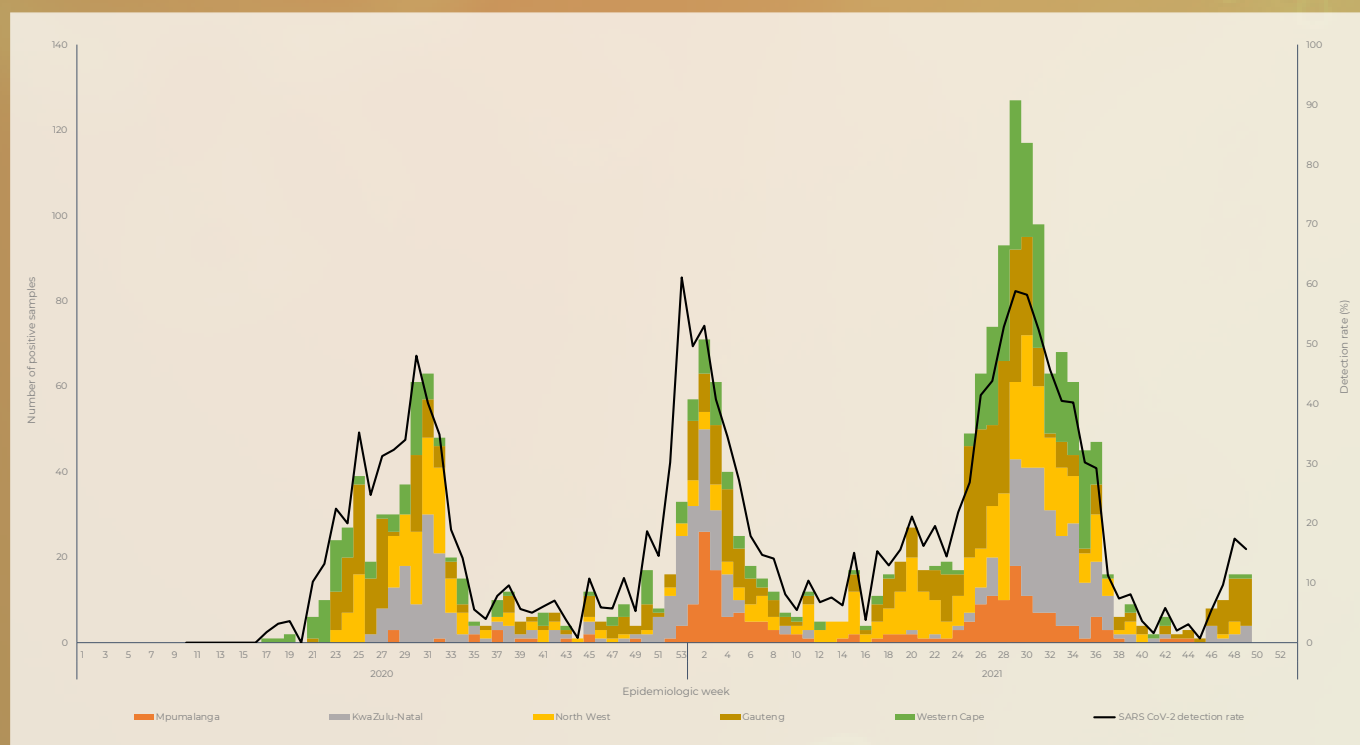
\*RSV results for subgroups are pending

\*\*RSV was detected in six of 218 (3%) specimens from patients who met suspected SARS-CoV-2 case definition but did not meet pneumonia (SRI) case definition. These are not included in the table

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

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## NATIONAL SYNDROMIC SURVEILLANCE FOR PNEUMONIA



**Figure 15.** Number of patients testing positive for SARS-CoV-2\*<sup>§</sup> by province and detection rate by week, pneumonia surveillance public hospitals, 02/03/2020 – 12/12/2021

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

<sup>§</sup>SARS-CoV-2 was detected in 70 of 289 (24%) specimens from patients who met suspected SARS-CoV-2 case definition but did not meet pneumonia (SRI) case definition. These are not included in the epidemiological curve.

**Table 11.** Number of patients positive for SARS-CoV-2\*\* and total number of samples tested by hospital, pneumonia surveillance public hospitals, 02/03/2020 – 12/12/2021

Hospital (Province)	SARS-CoV-2 positive	Total samples tested
Edendale (KZ)	471	1 780
Helen Joseph-Rahima Moosa (GP)	527	2 404
Klerksdorp-Tshepong (NW)	480	1 509
Mapulaneng-Matikwana (MP)	167	873
Red Cross (WC)	63	1 740
Mitchell's Plain (WC)	352	1 367
Tintswalo (MP)	52	247
<b>Total:</b>	<b>2 112</b>	<b>9 920</b>

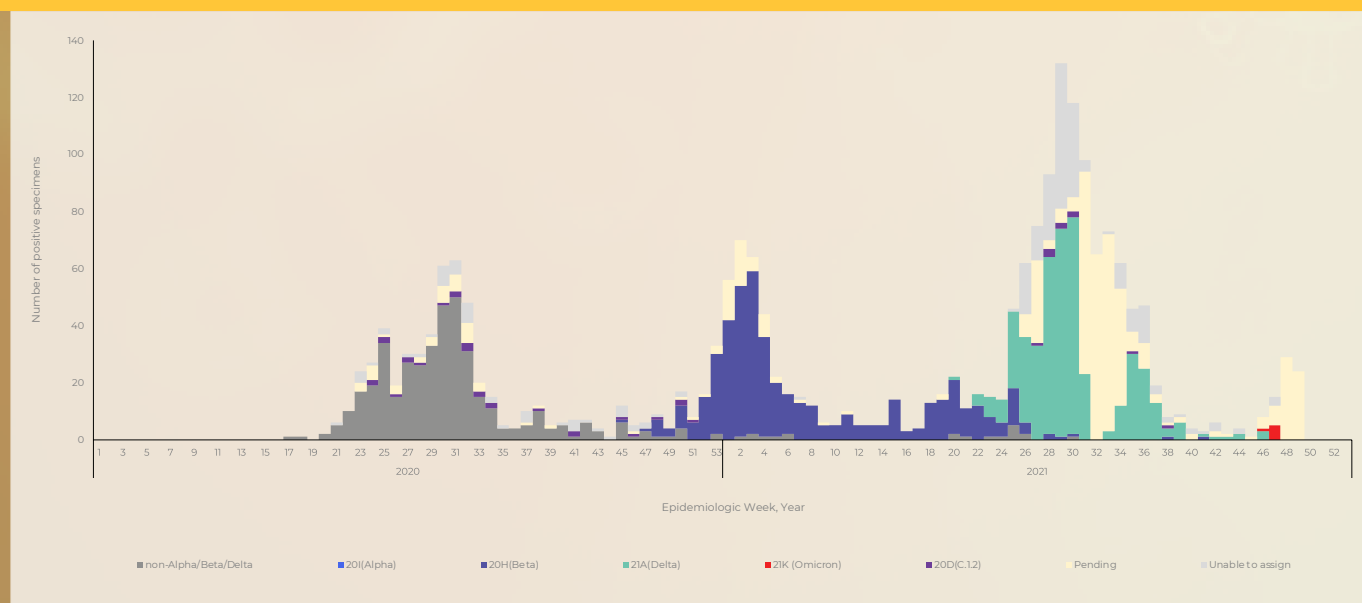
GP: Gauteng; KZ: KwaZulu-Natal; NW: North West; MP: Mpumalanga; WC: Western Cape

\*\*SARS-CoV-2 was detected in 70 of 289 (24%) specimens from patients who met suspected SARS-CoV-2 case definition but did not meet pneumonia (SRI) case definition. These are not included in the table.

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

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## NATIONAL SYNDROMIC SURVEILLANCE FOR PNEUMONIA



**Figure 16.** Number and detection rate of laboratory confirmed SARS-CoV-2 cases\* by variant type (variant PCR/sequencing), pneumonia surveillance public hospitals, 02/03/2020 – 12/12/2021

Specimens are from hospitalized patients at 7 sentinel sites in 5 provinces who met suspected SARS-CoV-2 case definition and met pneumonia (SRI) case definition as well as those that did not meet the SRI case definition.

**Unable to assign:** no lineage assigned due to poor- sequence quality OR low viral load (ct=>35) OR variant PCR could not assign variant and no sequencing result

**Pending:** outstanding variant results

**Table 12.** Number of SARS-CoV-2 positive cases\* by variant (variant PCR and/or sequencing) identified and total number of samples tested by hospital, pneumonia surveillance public hospitals, 02/03/2020 – 12/12/2021

Hospital (Province)	Non-Alpha/ Beta/Delta	20I (Alpha)	20H (Beta)	21A (Delta)	20D (C.1.2)	21K (Omicron)	Pending	Unable to assign	SARS-CoV-2 positive
Edendale (KZ)	98	1	77	87	7	0	157	38	466
Helen Joseph-Rahima Moosa (GP)	124	5	122	108	16	5	92	58	530
Klerksdorp-Tshepong (NW)	120	9	113	96	12	1	66	33	450
Mapulaneng- Matikwana (MP)	15	0	91	30	1	0	39	18	194
Red Cross (WC)	16	0	6	7	1	0	15	1	46
Mitchell's Plain (WC)	51	0	50	99	0	0	98	42	340
Tintswalo (MP)	0	1	12	16	0	0	20	1	50
<b>Total:</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>443</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>487</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>2 076</b>

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

\*Specimens are from hospitalized patients at 7 sentinel sites in 5 provinces who met suspected SARS-CoV-2 case definition and met pneumonia (SRI) case definition as well as those that did not meet the SRI case definition.

**Unable to assign:** no lineage assigned due to poor- sequence quality OR low viral load (ct=>35) OR variant PCR could not assign variant and no sequencing result

**Pending:** outstanding variant results

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

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

**Table 13.** Characteristics of individuals with laboratory-confirmed SARS-CoV-2, enrolled in influenza-like illness (ILI) and pneumonia surveillance programmes, South Africa, 2 March 2020 – 12 December 2021

Characteristic	Influenza-like illness (ILI), public-sector, n=746 (%)	Pneumonia, n=2 182 (%)
<b>Age group</b>		
0-9	53/746 (7)	145/2182 (7)
10-19	55/746 (7)	15/2182 (1)
20-39	351/746 (47)	436/2182 (19)
40-59	232/746 (31)	798/2182 (37)
60-79	53/746 (7)	711/2182 (33)
≥80	2/746 (<1)	77/2182 (4)
<b>Sex-female</b>	447/746 (60)	1340/2182 (61)
<b>Province*</b>		
Gauteng	N/A	553/2182 (25)
KwaZulu-Natal	124/746 (17)	479/2182 (22)
Mpumalanga**	88/746 (12)	254/2182 (12)
North West	375/746 (50)	480/2182 (22)
Western Cape	159/746 (21)	416/2182 (19)
<b>Race</b>		
Black	562/740 (76)	1733/2175 (80)
Coloured	146/740 (20)	334/2175 (15)
Asian/Indian	4/740 (1)	52/2175 (2)
White	22/740 (3)	44/2175 (2)
Other	6/740 (1)	11/2175 (<1)
<b>Variant<sup>§§</sup></b>		
Non-Alpha/Beta/Delta	147/662 (22)	424/1885 (22)
20I(Alpha)	15/662 (2)	16/1885 (1)
20H(Beta)	205/662 (31)	471/1885 (25)
21A(Delta)	145/662 (22)	444/1885 (24)
20D(C.1.2)	8/662 (1)	37/1885 (2)
21K(Omicron)	3/662 (0.5)	6/1885 (0.3)
Pending results	139/662 (21)	487/1885 (26)



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

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Characteristic	Influenza-like illness (ILI), public-sector, n=746 (%)	Pneumonia, n=2 182 (%)
<b>Presentation</b>		
Fever	580/740 (78)	992/2175 (46)
Cough	721/740 (97)	2058/2175 (95)
Shortness of breath	269/740 (36)	1679/2175 (77)
Chest pain	324/740 (44)	872/2175 (40)
Diarrhoea	58/740 (8)	138/2175 (6)
<b>Underlying conditions</b>		
Hypertension <sup>§</sup>	63/483 (13)	452/1333 (34)
Cardiac	2/740 (<1)	50/2175 (2)
Lung disease	0/740 (0)	3/2175 (<1)
Diabetes	17/740 (2)	443/2175 (21)
Cancer	2/740 (<1)	13/2175 (1)
Tuberculosis	11/740 (1)	59/2175 (3)
HIV-infection	140/740 (19)	485/2175 (22)
Other ***	13/740 (2)	94/2175 (4)
<b>SARS-CoV-2 Vaccine</b>		
Pfizer-BioNTech (1st dose)	13/452 (3)	94/1279 (7)
Pfizer-BioNTech (2nd dose)	3/452 (0.7)	14/1279 (1)
Johnson & Johnson	21/452 (5)	15/1279 (1)
<b>Management</b>		
Oxygen therapy	9/740 (1)	1673/2175 (77)
ICU admission	N/A	50/2175 (2)
Ventilation	N/A	55/2175 (3)
<b>Outcome***</b>		
Died	0/737 (0)	360/2084 (17)

<sup>§</sup>ILI surveillance not conducted in Gauteng province

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

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

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

<sup>†</sup>Data on hypertension was not collected on all cases

<sup>§§</sup> These individuals with unassigned sequence are not included, ILI (n=181) and SRI (n=594)

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

Of the 360 patients who died, three were in <20 age group, 28 in the 20-39 year age group, 122 in the 40-59 year age group, and 207 were ≥60 years; 203/360 (56%) were female.

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

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## METHODS

### SARS-CoV-2 Testing

March 2020 – March 2021: SARS-CoV-2 was detected using the Roche E gene real-time PCR assay (Corman et al. Euro Surveillance 2020) with cycle threshold (Ct) <40 interpreted as positive for SARS-CoV-2. From April 2021 to date the laboratory changed to the Allplex™ SARS-CoV-2/FluA/FluB/RSV kit (Seegene Inc., Seoul, South Korea), with positivity assigned if the PCR cycle threshold (Ct) was <40 for ≥1 gene targets (N, S or RdRp).

A confirmed SARS-CoV-2 case is a person of any age enrolled in surveillance with laboratory confirmation of SARS-CoV-2 infection by PCR. Only positive SARS-CoV-2 specimens on PCR are further tested to determine variant/lineage type by variant PCR or genomic sequencing.

#### Variant PCR

Allplex™ SARS-CoV-2 Variants I PCR detects Alpha and Beta/Gamma variants. The assay was conducted on all SARS-CoV-2-positive samples from 1 March 2020 – 30 June 2021.

Allplex™ SARS-CoV-2 Variants II PCR detects Delta variant and distinguishes Beta from Gamma. The assay was conducted on SARS-CoV-2-positive samples from 1 Jan to 30 June 2021.

Extraction: Total nucleic acids were extracted from 200µl NP/OP samples in universal or viral transport medium using a MagNA Pure 96 automated extractor and DNA/Viral NA Small Volume v2.0 extraction kit (Roche Diagnostics, Mannheim, Germany).

### SARS-CoV-2 genomic surveillance

#### SARS-CoV-2 Whole-Genome Sequencing and Genome Assembly

##### RNA Extraction

##### RNA Extraction

RNA was extracted either manually or automatically in batches, using the QIAamp viral RNA mini kit (QIAGEN, CA, USA) or the Chemagic 360 using the CMG-1049 kit (PerkinElmer, MA, USA). A modification was done on the manual extractions by adding 280 µl per sample, in order to increase yields. 300 µl of each sample was used for automated magnetic bead-based extraction using the Chemagic 360. RNA was eluted in 60 µl of the elution buffer. Isolated RNA was stored at -80 °C prior to use.

##### PCR and Library Preparation

Sequencing was performed using the Illumina COVIDSeq protocol (Illumina Inc., CA, USA) or nCoV-2019 ARTIC network sequencing protocol v3 (<https://artic.network/ncov-2019>). These are amplicon-based next-generation sequencing approaches. Briefly, for the nCoV-2019 ARTIC network sequencing protocol, the first strand synthesis was carried out on extracted RNA samples using random hexamer primers from the SuperScript IV reverse transcriptase synthesis kit (Life Technologies, CA, USA) or LunaScript RT SuperMix Kit (New England Biolabs (NEB), MA, USA). The synthesized cDNA was amplified using multiplex polymerase chain reactions

(PCRs) using ARTIC nCoV-2019 v3 primers. For the COVIDSeq protocol, the first strand synthesis was carried out using random hexamer primers from Illumina and the synthesized cDNA underwent two separate multiplex PCR reactions.

For Illumina sequencing using the nCoV-2019 ARTIC network sequencing protocol, the pooled PCR products underwent bead-based tagmentation using the Nextera Flex DNA library preparation kit (Illumina Inc., CA, USA). The adapter-tagged amplicons were cleaned up using AmpureXP purification beads (Beckman Coulter, High Wycombe, UK) and amplified using one round of PCR. The PCRs were indexed using the Nextera CD indexes (Illumina Inc., CA, USA) according to the manufacturer's instructions. For COVIDSeq sequencing protocol, pooled PCR amplified products were processed for tagmentation and adapter ligation using IDT for Illumina Nextera UD Indexes. Further enrichment and cleanup was performed as per protocols provided by the manufacturer (Illumina Inc., CA, USA). Pooled samples from both COVIDSeq protocol and nCoV-2019 ARTIC network protocol were quantified using Qubit 3.0 or 4.0 fluorometer (Invitrogen Inc., MA, USA) using the Qubit dsDNA High Sensitivity assay according to manufacturer's instructions. The fragment sizes were analyzed using TapeStation 4200 (Invitrogen Inc., MA, USA). The pooled libraries were further normalized to 4nM concentration and 25 µl of each normalized pool containing unique index adapter sets were combined in a new tube. The final library pool was denatured and neutralized with 0.2 N sodium hydroxide and 200 mM Tris-HCL (pH7), respectively. 1.5 pM sample library was spiked with 2% PhiX. Libraries were loaded onto a 300-cycle NextSeq 500/550 HighOutput Kit v2 and run on the Illumina NextSeq 550 instrument (Illumina Inc., CA, USA).

#### Assembly, Processing and Quality Control of Genomic Sequences

Raw reads from Illumina sequencing were assembled using the Exatype NGS SARS-CoV-2 pipeline v1.6.1, (<https://sars-cov-2.exatype.com/>). The resulting consensus sequence was further manually polished by considering and correcting indels in homopolymer regions that break the open reading frame (probably sequencing errors) using Aliview v1.27, (<http://ormbunkar.se/aliview/>) (Larsson, 2014). Mutations resulting in mid-gene stop codons and frameshifts were reverted to wild type. All assemblies determined to have acceptable quality (defined as having at least 1 000 000 reads and at least 40 % 10 X coverage) were deposited on GISAID (<https://www.gisaid.org/>) (Elbe & Buckland-Merrett, 2017; Shu & McCauley, 2017).

#### Classification of Lineage, Clade and Associated Mutations

Assembled genomes were assigned lineages using the 'Phylogenetic Assignment of Named Global Outbreak Lineages' (PANGOLIN) software suite (<https://github.com/hCoV-2019/pangolin>) (Rambaut et al., 2020), a tool used for dynamic SARS-CoV-2 lineage classification. The SARS-CoV-2 genomes in our dataset were also classified using the clade classification proposed by NextStrain (<https://nextstrain.org/>), a tool built for real-time tracking of the pathogen evolution (Hadfield et al., 2018).