

Influenza

Weekly Surveillance Bulletin

Weeks 44- 45 (28 October—10 November 2019)

Community Activity

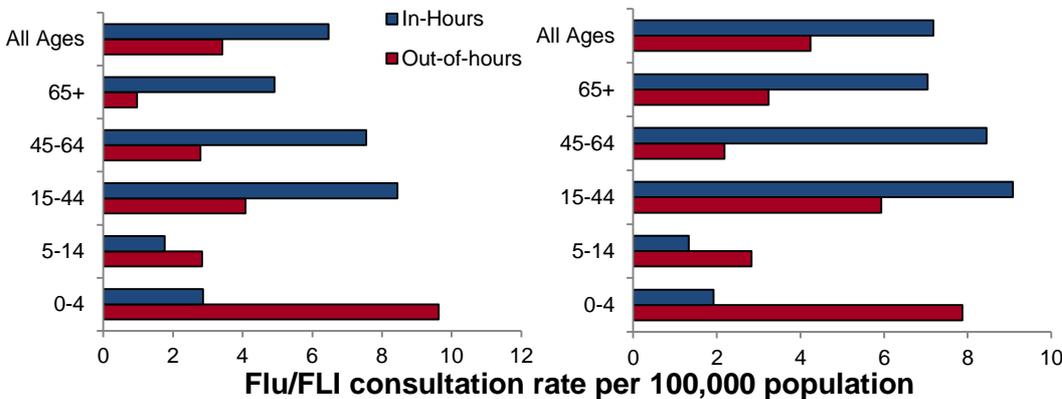
Flu Intensity:	Baseline	Low	Medium	High	Very High
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	October					November				December				January					February				March				April				May		
Week	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
2019/20																																	
2018/19																																	

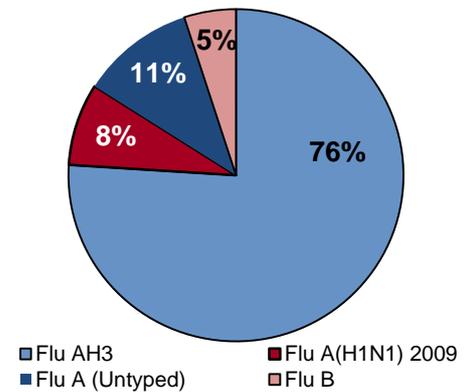
GP consultation rates for 'flu/flu-like-illness' ('flu/FLI')

(Wk 44: 28 Oct — 03 Nov 2019)

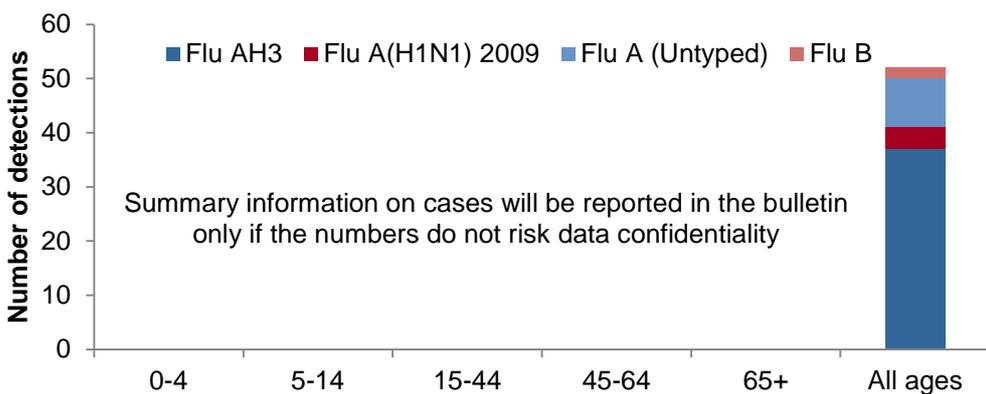
(Wk 45: 04 — 10 Nov 2019)



Circulating strains this season to date



Number of hospital cases with confirmed flu (28 Oct — 10 Nov 2019)



To date there have been <5 admissions to ICU with confirmed influenza

Respiratory Outbreaks (28 Oct — 10 Nov 2019)

0

To date there has been no flu outbreaks reported

Influenza vaccine uptake 2019-20

Vaccine uptake rates for 2019-20 will appear here later in the season.

Annual Influenza Surveillance Report 2018-19

The end of season report, Surveillance of Influenza in Northern Ireland 2018-19 is now available to download [here](#)



GP consultation rates for ‘flu/flu-like-illness’ (‘flu/FLI’)

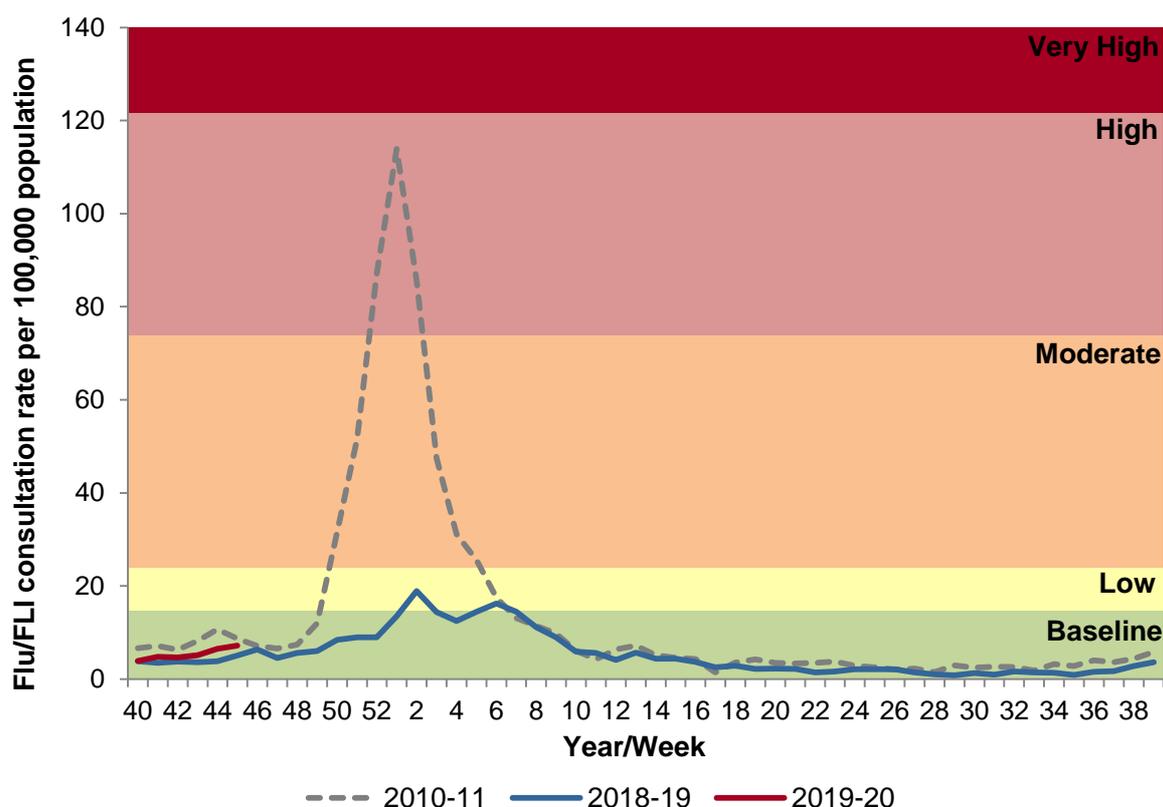


Figure 1. Northern Ireland GP consultation rates for ‘flu/FLI’ 2018/19 – 2019/20, 2010/11 for comparison

The baseline MEM threshold for Northern Ireland is 14.7 per 100,000 population for 2019-20. Low activity is 14.7 to <23.9, moderate activity 23.9 to <73.9, high activity 73.9 to <121.7 and very high activity is >121.7

Comment

GP flu/FLI consultation rates were 6.5 per 100,000 population in week 44 and 7.2 per 100,000 in week 45, which is higher than the same time last year (3.8 and 5.0 per 100,000, respectively). Activity remains below the baseline threshold for Northern Ireland (<14.7 per 100,000) (Figure 1).

Flu/FLI consultation rates were highest in 15-44 year olds in weeks 44 and 45 (8.4 and 9.1 per 100,000 population, respectively). Rates are higher in all age groups, except 0-4 and 5-14 year olds, compared to the same period last year (week 45, 2018-19).

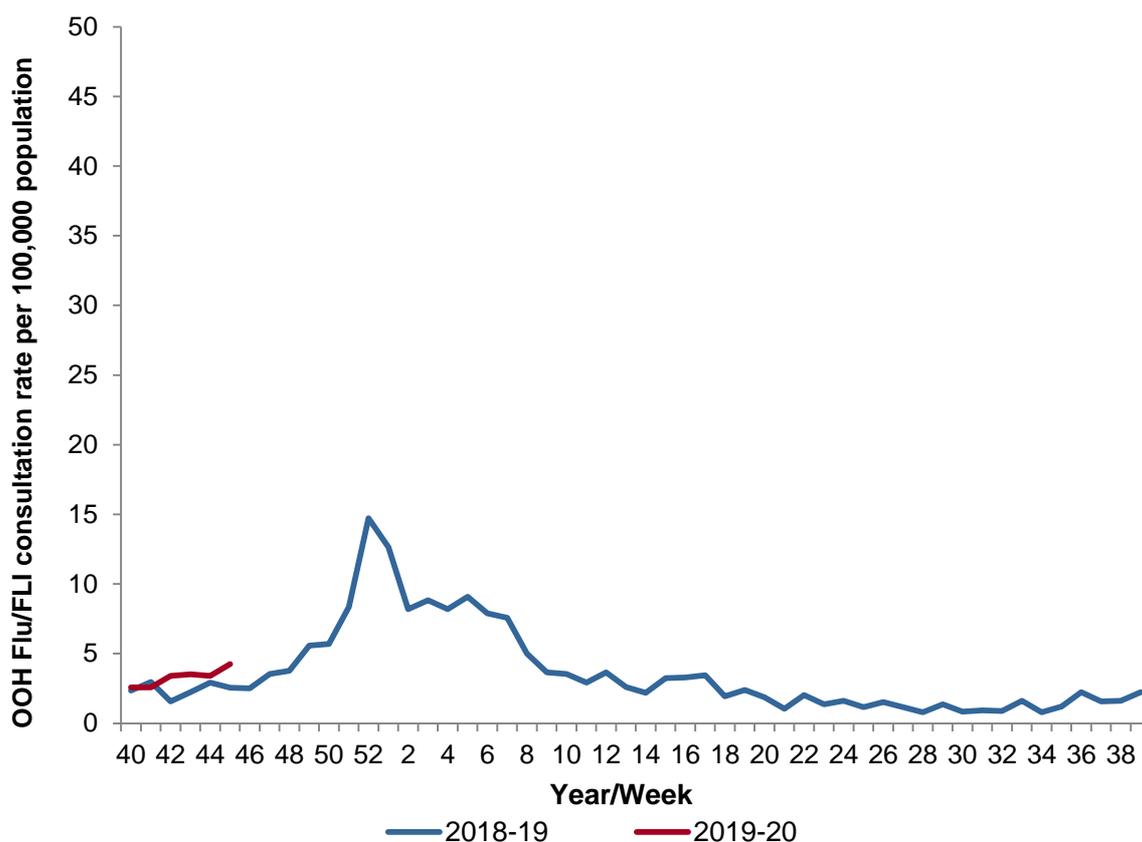


Figure 2. Northern Ireland Out of Hours (OOH) consultation rates for 'flu/FLI' 2018/19 – 2019/20

Comment

Flu/FLI consultation rates in Primary Care Out-of-Hours (OOH) Centres were 3.4 per 100,000 population in week 44 and 4.2 per 100,000 population in week 45. This is higher than the same period last year (2.6 per 100,000 population in week 45, 2018-19) (Figure 2).

In weeks 44 and 45 the percentage of calls to an OOH Centre due to flu/FLI was similar (0.6% and 0.8%, respectively). This is similar to the same period last year (0.5%).

Rates were highest in those aged 0-4 years in both weeks 44 and 45, 9.6 and 7.9 per 100,000 population, respectively. In comparison to week 45, 2018-19, consultation rates were higher in all age groups.

Virology

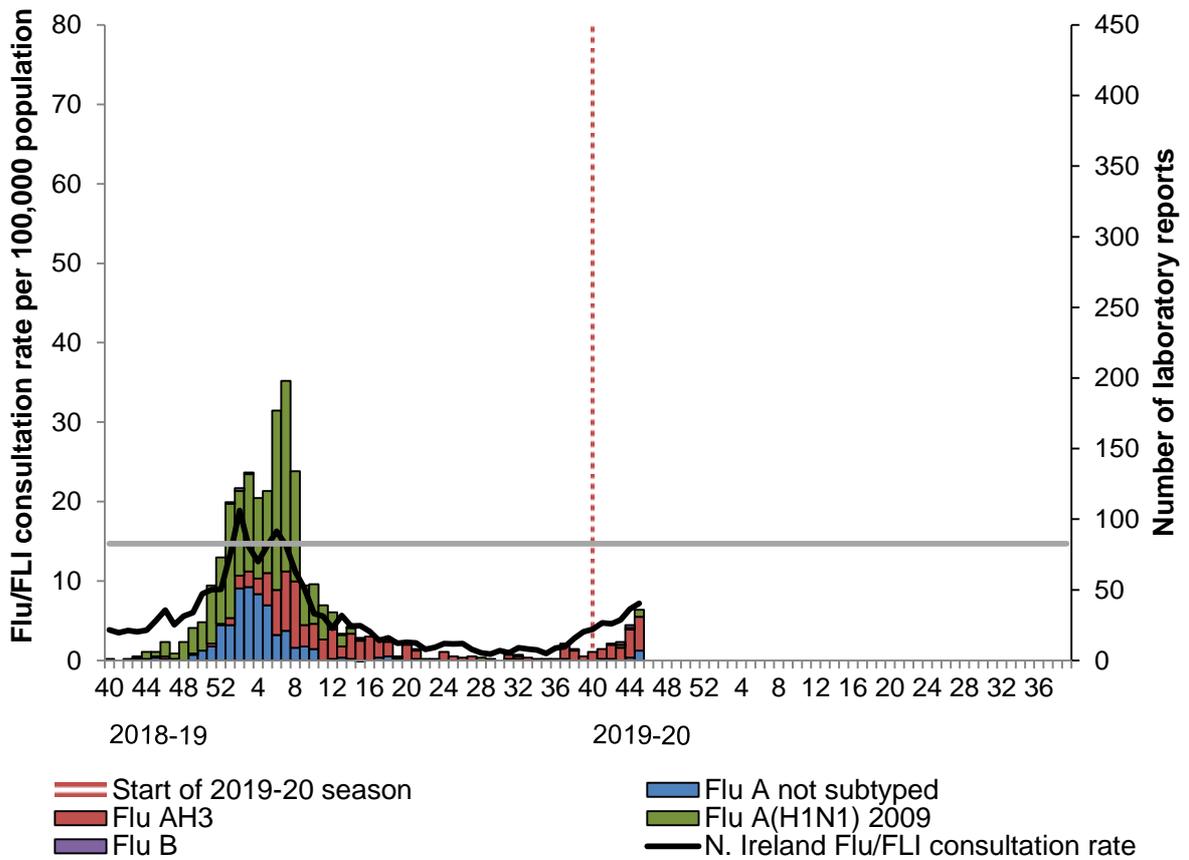


Figure 3. Weekly number of flu laboratory reports from week 40, 2018 with weekly GP consultation rates for ‘flu/FLI’

Table 1. Virus activity in Northern Ireland by source, Weeks 44-45, 2019-20

Source	Specimens tested	Flu AH3	Flu A(H1N1) 2009	Flu A (Untyped)	Flu B	RSV	Total Influenza Positive	% Influenza Positive
Sentinel	24	4	1	0	0	4	5	21%
Non-sentinel	624	40	5	9	2	102	56	9%
Total	648	44	6	9	2	106	61	9%

Table 2. Cumulative virus activity from all sources by age group, Week 40 - 45, 2019-20

Age Group	Flu AH3	Flu A(H1N1) 2009	Flu A (Untyped)	Flu B	Total Influenza	RSV
0-4	7	3	0	1	11	174
5-14	4	0	1	1	6	5
15-64	44	3	4	3	54	30
65+	21	2	6	0	29	22
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0
All ages	76	8	11	5	100	231

Table 3. Cumulative virus activity by age group and source, Week 40 - Week 45, 2019-20

Age Group	Sentinel						Non-sentinel					
	Flu AH3	Flu A(H1N1) 2009	Flu A (Untyped)	Flu B	Total Influenza	RSV	Flu AH3	Flu A(H1N1) 2009	Flu A (Untyped)	Flu B	Total Influenza	RSV
0-4	2	0	0	0	2	0	5	3	0	1	9	174
5-14	1	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	1	1	5	5
15-64	7	1	1	1	10	3	37	2	3	2	44	27
65+	1	0	0	0	1	1	20	2	6	0	28	21
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
All ages	11	1	1	1	14	4	65	7	10	4	86	227

Note

All virology data are provisional. The virology figures for previous weeks included in this or future bulletins are updated with data from laboratory returns received after the production of the last bulletin. The current bulletin reflects the most up-to-date information available. Sentinel and non-sentinel samples are tested for influenza and for RSV. Cumulative reports of influenza A (untyped) may vary from week to week as these may be subsequently typed in later reports.

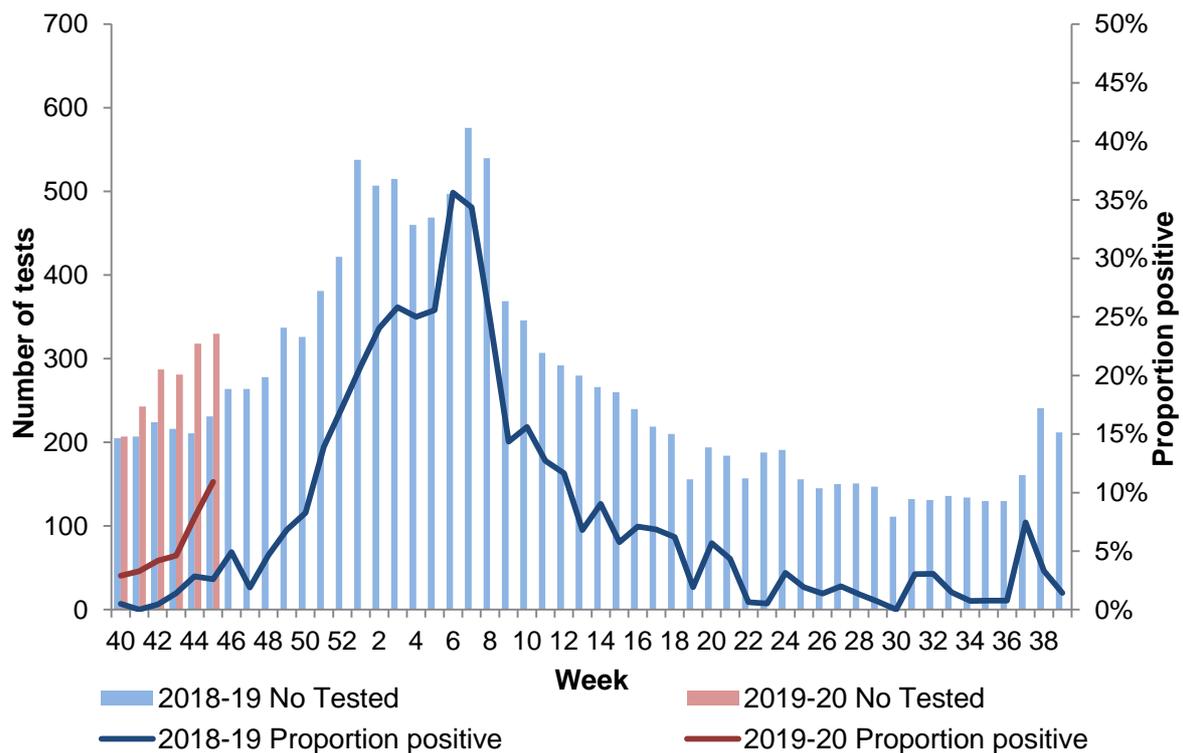


Figure 4. Number of samples tested for influenza and proportion positive, 2018/19 – 2019/20, all sources

Comment

In weeks 44 and 45, 61 samples were positive for flu (44 Flu A(H3), six Flu A(H1N1), nine Flu A(Untyped) and two Flu B) from 648 submitted for testing in laboratories across Northern Ireland.

Overall positivity of 9% is higher than this time last year (3%).

Five of the 24 samples submitted by the GP based sentinel scheme were positive for flu (four Flu A(H3) and one Flu A(H1N1)) (Figures 3 and 4; Tables 1, 2 and 3).

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

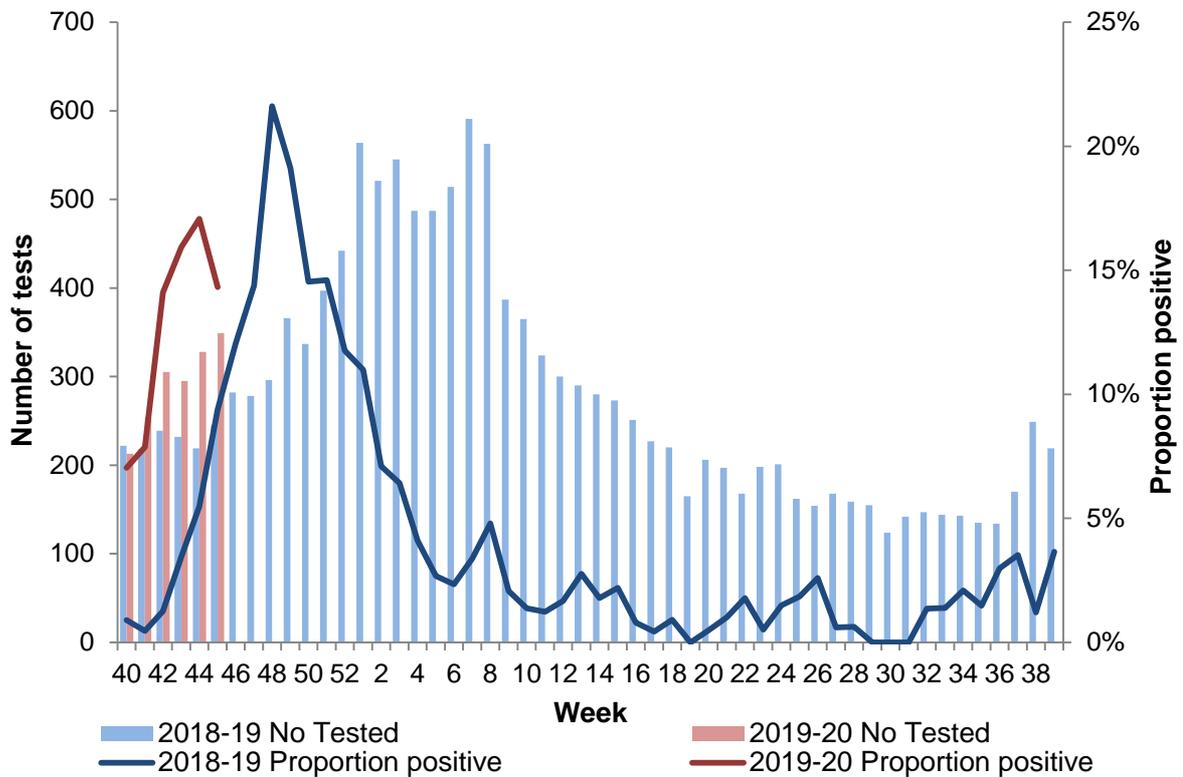


Figure 5. Number of samples tested for RSV and proportion positive, 2018/19 – 2019/20, all sources

Comment

In weeks 44 and 45, 106 samples were positive for RSV, with overall positivity in week 45 (14%) higher than the same period last season (9%).

The majority (75%) of cases since week 40 have occurred in children aged 0-4 years (Table 2 and Figure 5).

Hospital Surveillance (Non-ICU/HDU)

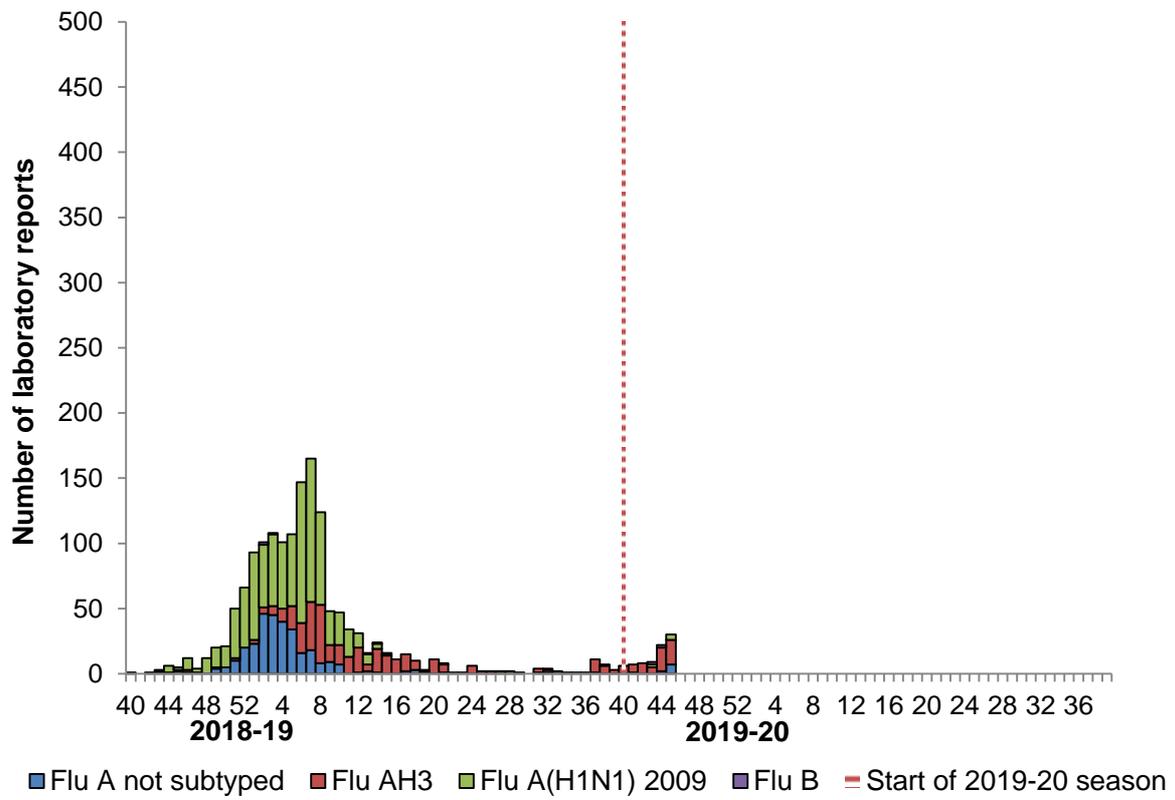


Figure 6. Weekly number of hospitalisations testing positive for influenza by week of specimen, 2018/19 – 2019/20

Comment

In weeks 44 and 45, 52 hospitalisations tested positive for flu (37 Flu A(H3), four Flu A(H1N1), nine Flu A(Untyped) and two Flu B). This is an increase compared to the same time last year (Figure 6).

Of note, not all positive specimens may have been reported as this point.

ICU/HDU Surveillance

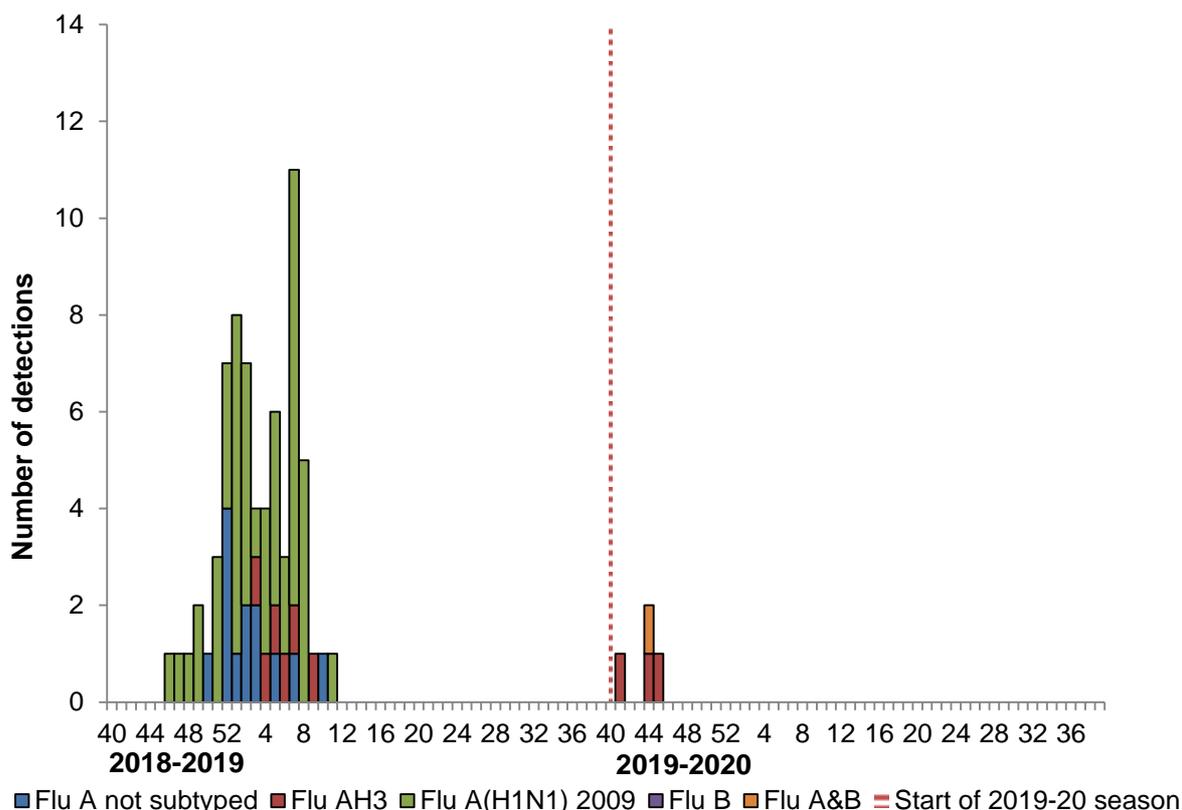


Figure 7. Confirmed ICU/HDU influenza cases by week of specimen, 2018/19 – 2019/20

Comment

Data are collected on laboratory confirmed influenza patients and deaths in critical care (level 2 and level 3). There were three new admissions to ICU with confirmed influenza reported to the Public Health Agency (PHA) during weeks 44 and 45. So far this season there has been four admissions to ICU with confirmed influenza (three Flu A(H3) and one Flu A&B) reported to the PHA (Figure 7).

Summary information on cases will be reported in the bulletin only if the numbers do not risk data confidentiality.

Outbreaks

There have been no confirmed respiratory outbreaks reported to the PHA Health Protection acute response duty room so far this season.

Mortality

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) provide the weekly number of **respiratory associated deaths** and its proportion of all-cause registered deaths.

Respiratory associated deaths include those that are attributable to influenza, other respiratory infections or their complications. This includes “*bronchiolitis, bronchitis, influenza or pneumonia*” keywords recorded on the death certificate.

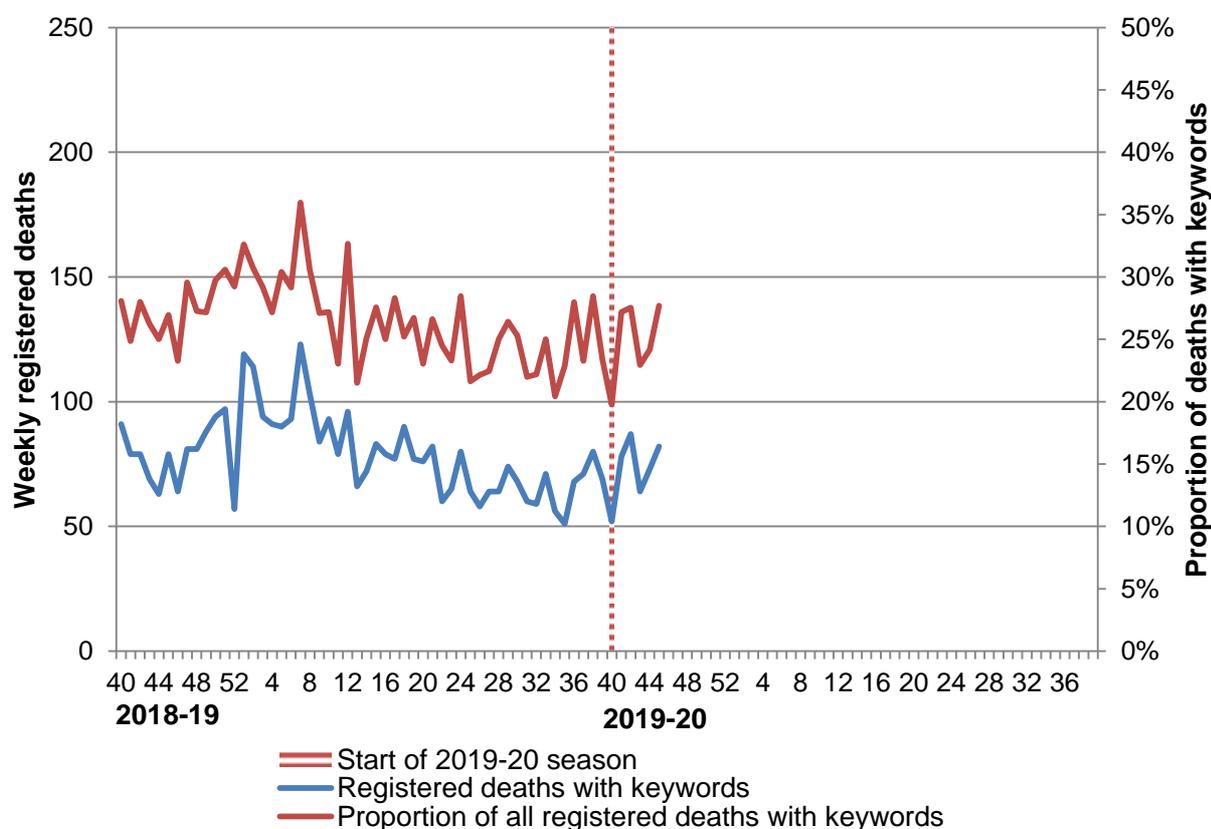


Figure 8. Weekly registered deaths and proportion of all deaths with keywords, by week of registration from week 40, 2018

Comment

In week 45, 82 respiratory associated deaths out of 296 all-cause deaths were reported (28%), with 24% in week 44. These trends are broadly the same as the same period in 2018/19 (Figure 8).

EuroMOMO

There was no excess all-cause mortality reported in Northern Ireland in weeks 44 and 45

Please note this data is provisional due to the time delay in registration; numbers may vary from week to week.

Information on mortality from all causes is provided for management purpose from Public Health England. Excess mortality is defined as a statistically significant increase in the number of deaths reported over the expected number for a given point in time. This calculation allows for a weekly variation in the number of deaths registered and takes account of deaths registered retrospectively. Information is used to provide an early warning to the health service of any seasonal increases in mortality to allow further investigation of excess detections.

There is no single cause of 'additional' deaths in the winter months but they are often attributed in part to cold weather (e.g. directly from falls, fractures, road traffic accidents), through worsening of chronic medical conditions e.g. heart and respiratory complaints and through respiratory infections including influenza.

For more information on EuroMOMO and interactive maps of reporting across the season please see <http://www.euromomo.eu/index.html>

Influenza Vaccine Uptake

Vaccine uptake rates for 2019-20 will be reported in the bulletin later in the season. Uptake rates for the previous two seasons are shown below.

Table 4. Influenza vaccine uptake rates, 2017-18 and 2018-19

	2018/19 (to 31 March)	2017/18 (to 31 March)
All 2 to 4 year olds	47.6%	50.6%
All primary school children (4 to 11 year olds)	75.9%	76.5%
All pregnant women	44.3%	47.1%
Individuals under 65 years with a chronic medical condition	52.4%	56.0%
All individuals 65 years and over	70.0%	71.8%
Frontline health and social care workers employed by a Trust	35.4%	33.4%
Frontline health care workers employed by a Trust	39.5%	-
Frontline social care workers employed by a Trust	22.5%	-

Further Information and International/National Updates

Further information

Further information on influenza is available at the following websites:

[PHA Seasonal Influenza](#)

[nidirect Flu Vaccination](#)

[PHE Seasonal Influenza Guidance - Data and Analysis](#)

[WHO Influenza](#)

[ECDC Seasonal Influenza](#)

National updates

Detailed influenza weekly reports can be found at the following websites:

England [PHE Weekly National Flu Report](#)

Scotland [HPS Weekly National Seasonal Respiratory Report](#)

Wales [Public Health Wales Influenza Surveillance Report](#)

Republic of Ireland [HPSC Seasonal Influenza Surveillance Reports](#)

International updates

Europe (ECDC and WHO) [Flu News Europe](#)

Worldwide (WHO) [WHO Influenza Surveillance Monitoring](#)

USA (CDC) [Weekly U.S. Influenza Surveillance Report](#)

Acknowledgements

We would like to extend our thanks to all those who assist us in the surveillance of influenza in particular the sentinel GPs, Out-of-Hours Centres, Apollo Medical, Regional Virus Laboratory, Critical Care Network for Northern Ireland and Public Health England. Their work is greatly appreciated and their support vital in the production of this bulletin.

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