Report No. 1: Week ending 9 May 2021

**Overview: The 2021 influenza season so far**

VicSPIN influenza surveillance has commenced with a smaller cohort of GPs contributing data due to changes in clinical practice in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some GPs have elected not to collect swabs but will continue to report all ILIs even when the patient has been referred to alternative clinics for swab collection.

**Influenza-like illness** (ILI) is **below the average activity** threshold for the first reporting week of 2021, **with 3.7 ILIs per 1000 patients seen.**

The number of notified cases of laboratory confirmed influenza is **99% lower** than the number notified by the same time in 2020. The majority of notified cases have been **type A (90%)**. There has also been one influenza type C case.

**Six swabs** were received from VicSPIN this week, of which 0 tested positive for influenza. Seasonal coronavirus, RSV and picornavirus were detected from one swab each.

*Figure 1. Routinely notified influenza cases, VicSPIN and National Home Doctor Service (NHDS) ILI consultation proportions, Victoria, 2015 – 2021*

**National Home Doctor Service (Victoria)**

* The ILI proportion for this week is **1.6 0 ILI cases per 1,000** patients seen (Figure 1).
* ILI activity is **well below** the average activity threshold range of 10-35 ILI cases per 1,000 patients seen.

**Victorian Sentinel Practice Influenza Network**

* The ILI proportion measured by VicSPIN for this week is below the average activity threshold with 3.7 ILI cases per 1,000 patients seen. (Figures 1 & 2, and Table 1).
* Six swabs were received from VicSPIN this week (Figure 3 and Table 1).
* There were 0 that tested positive for influenza. (Figure 3 and Table 1).
* Seasonal coronavirus, RSV and picornavirus were detected from one swab each (Figure 3).

*Table 1. Summary of reporting from general practice sentinel sites, week ending 9 May 2021.*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Week | Year-to-date |
| Number (%) of general practitioners reporting | 31 (100%) |  |
| Total patients seen | 2693 | 2693 |
| Total patients with ILI | 10 | 10 |
| Consultation rate for ILI (per 1,000 patients) | 3.7 | 3.7 |
| Number of specimens received | 6 | 6 |
| Number (%) positive for influenza | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) |

*Figure 2. VicSPIN ILI consultation proportions, Victoria, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021*

*Figure 3. VicSPIN respiratory virus detections and percent influenza positive, Victoria, 2021*

**Observations from other influenza surveillance systems**

***Notified cases of laboratory confirmed influenza***

* The number of notified cases of laboratory confirmed influenza for this week, is 0 cases.
* A total of 60 cases of laboratory confirmed influenza have been processed so far in 2021, a 99% decrease on the number notified by the same time in 2020 (Figure 1).
* Year to date, 90% of notified cases have been type A (22% of Type A cases are aged less than 10 years and 19% aged 65 years and over) and 8% have been type B (100% of Type B cases are aged between 10 and 65 years).
* There has been one notified case of influenza type C.

***World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Reference and Research on Influenza***

* The strains included in the 2021 egg-based influenza quadrivalent vaccine are: A/Victoria/2570/2019 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus, A/Hong Kong/2671/2019 (H3N2)-like virus, B/Washington/02/2019-like (B/Victoria lineage) and B/Phuket/3073/2013-like (B/Yamagata lineage) virus. The trivalent vaccine excludes the B/Yamagata lineage virus.
* The strains included in the 2021 cell-based influenza quadrivalent vaccine are: A/Wisconsin/588/2019 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus, A/Hong Kong/2671/2019 (H3N2)-like virus, B/Washington/02/2019-like (B/Victoria lineage) and B/Phuket/3073/2013-like (B/Yamagata lineage) virus.
* A total of 0 Victorian isolates have been strain-typed by the WHO to date:

0 as A/Victoria/2570/2019-Like

0 as A/Victoria/2570/2019-Low Reactor

0 as A/Darwin/726/2019-Like

0 as A/Darwin/726/2019-Low Reactor

0 as B/Washington/02/2019-Like

0 as B/Washington/02/2019-Low Reactor

0 as B/Phuket/3073/2013-Like

0 as B/Phuket/3073/2013-Low Reactor

N.B. A/Darwin/726/2019 is the cell equivalent of A/Hong Kong/2671/2019-H3N2 vaccine strain.

* No isolates have shown resistance to zanamivir or oseltamivir, among the 5 Australian isolates tested so far in 2021.