

Influenza Weekly Surveillance Bulletin

Northern Ireland, Weeks 41 and 42 (9–22 October 2010)

Summary

- All influenza indicators are at low levels;
- GP consultation rates for combined flu/FLI decreased from 19.4/100,000 population (updated) in Wk 40 to 12.4/100,000 in Wk 41 and then increased to 13.7/100,000 in Wk 42.
 - flu/FLI rates remain well below the Northern Ireland threshold (70/100,000 population);
 - flu/FLI rates are at low levels in all age groups.
- One positive Influenza A (H1N1) 2009 detection in Wk 41;
- There were two RSV detections in Wk 42;
- Out-of-hours flu/FLI call rates remain low and stable.

Introduction

Data to monitor influenza activity in Northern Ireland is collected from the following sources:

- GP Sentinel surveillance representing 11.6% of the Northern Ireland population;
- GP out-of-hours surveillance system;
- Virological reports from the Regional Virus Laboratory (RVL);
- Mortality data from Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

Sentinel GP consultation data

Figure 1: Sentinel GP consultation rate for combined flu and flu-like illness and number of virology flu detections from Wk 40 2009

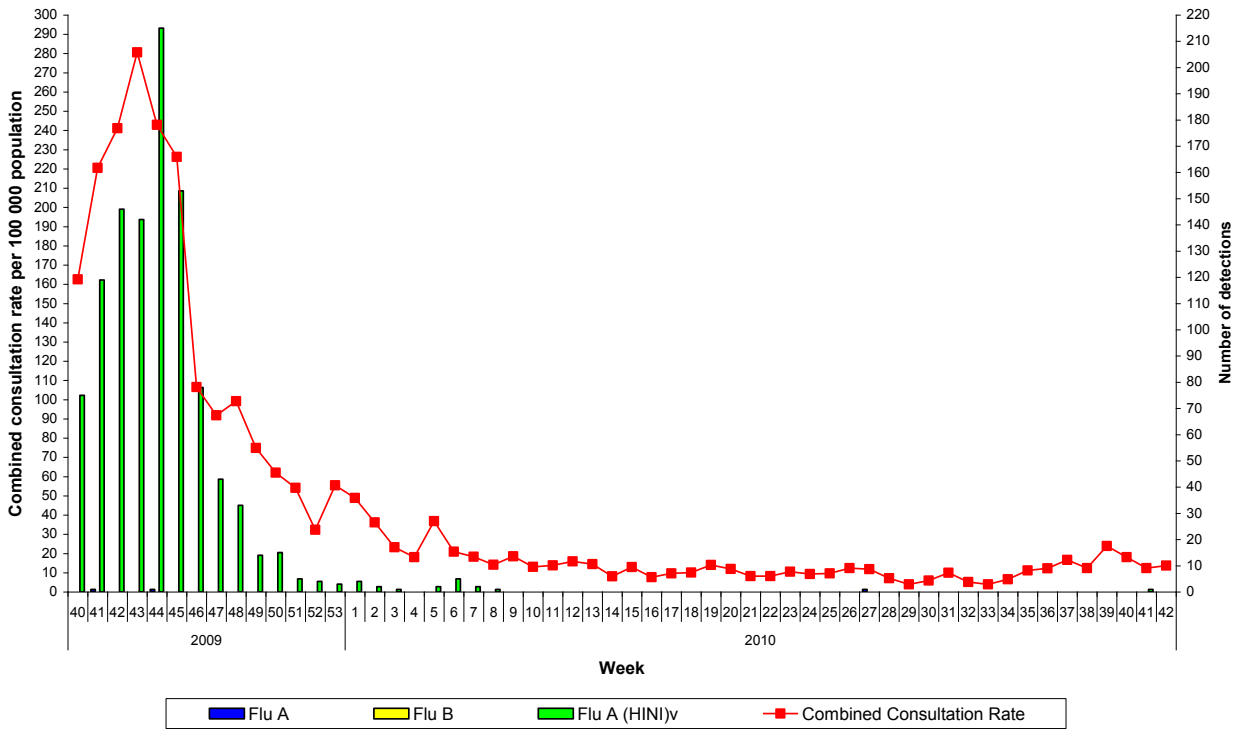


Figure 2: Sentinel GP consultation rate for combined flu and flu-like illness 2007/2008–2010/2011

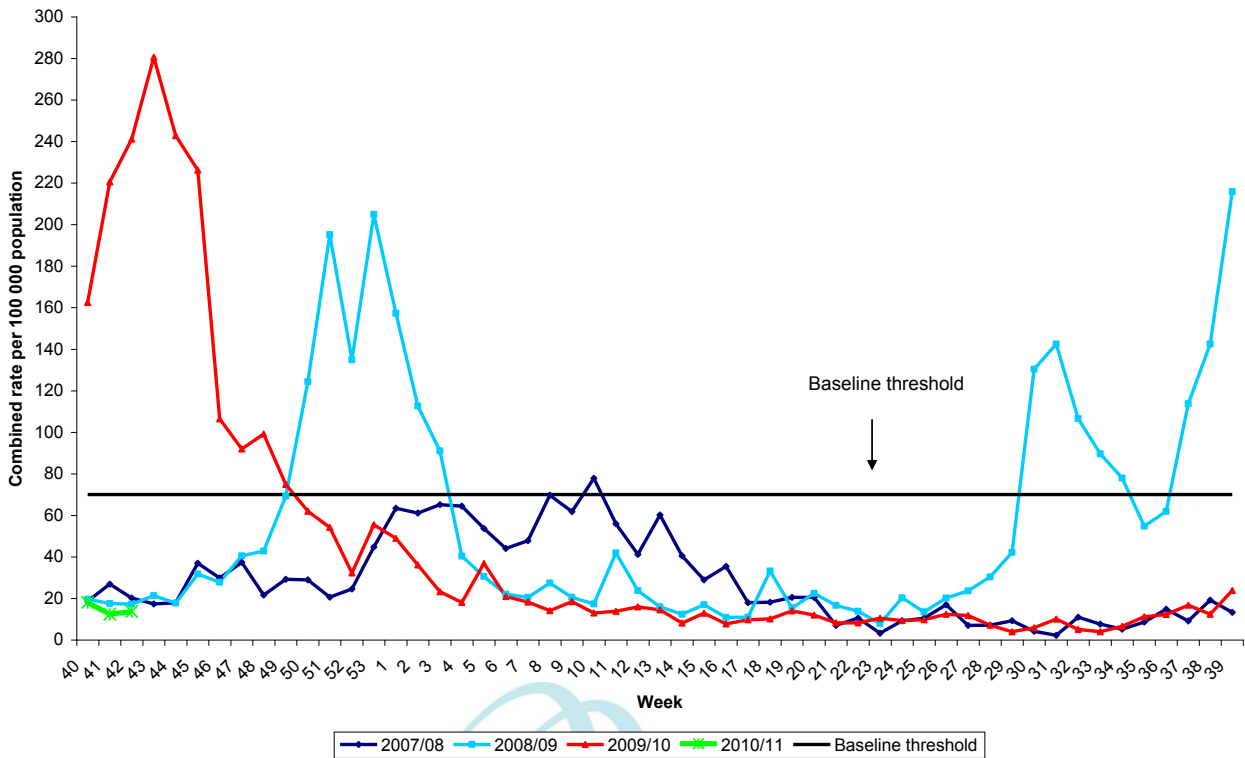
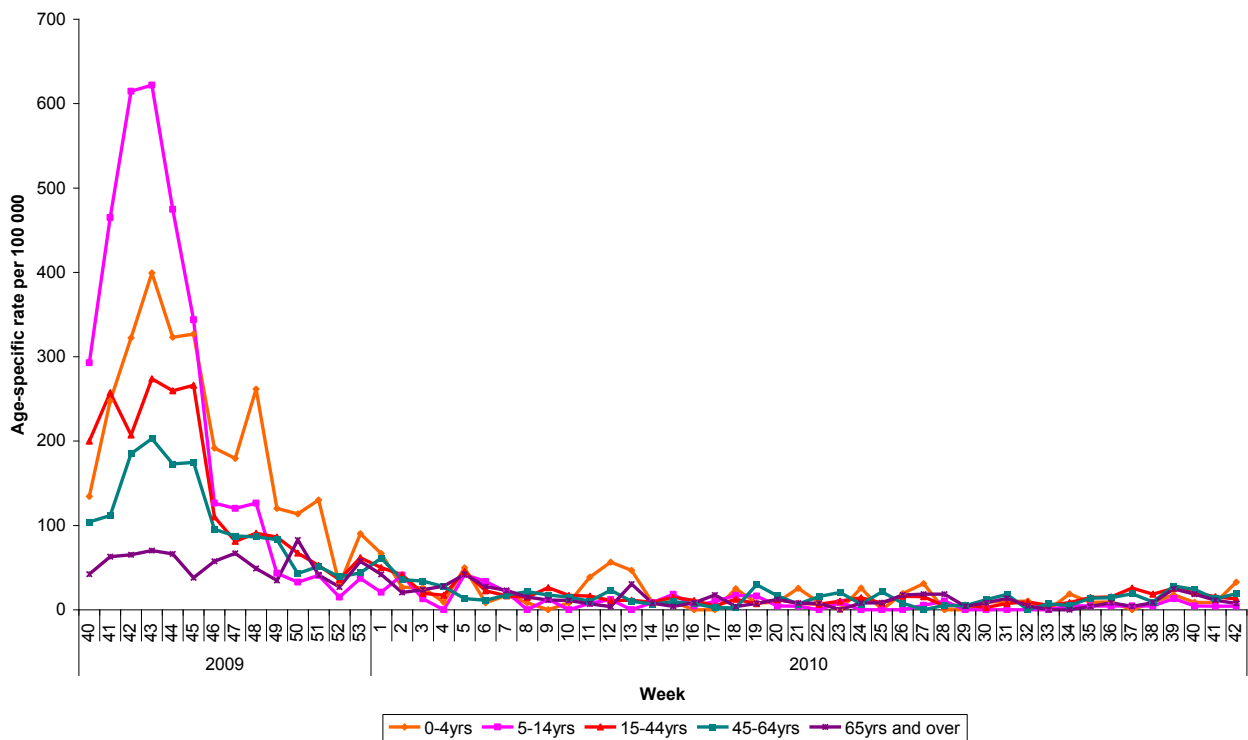


Figure 3: Sentinel GP age-specific consultation rates for combined flu and flu-like illness from Wk 40 2009



Comments:

The GP combined consultation rate per 100,000 population decreased from 19.4/100,000 population (updated) in Wk 40 to 12.4/100,000 in Wk 41 and then increased to 13.7/100,000 in Wk 42 (29% decrease overall). Rates are lower than same weeks of previous years and continue to remain well below the Northern Ireland threshold (Figure 2).

Age specific rates remain low with the highest age specific combined rates in Wk 41 in the 15–44 year age group, and in the 0–4 year age group for Wk 42.

Out-of-hours (OOH) centres call data

Figure 4: OOH Call rates for flu and flu-like illness 2009/2010 v 2010/2011

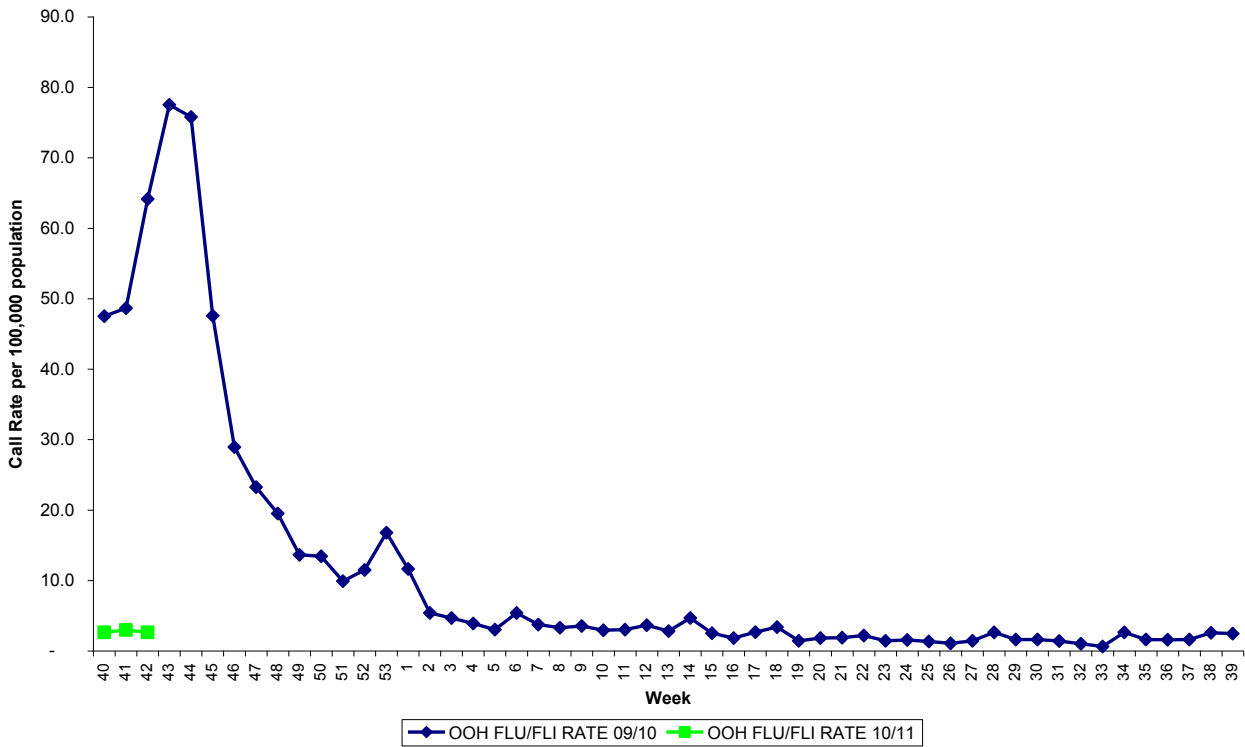


Figure 5: OOH total call rate (all diagnoses) and call rate for flu and flu-like illness from Week 40 2009

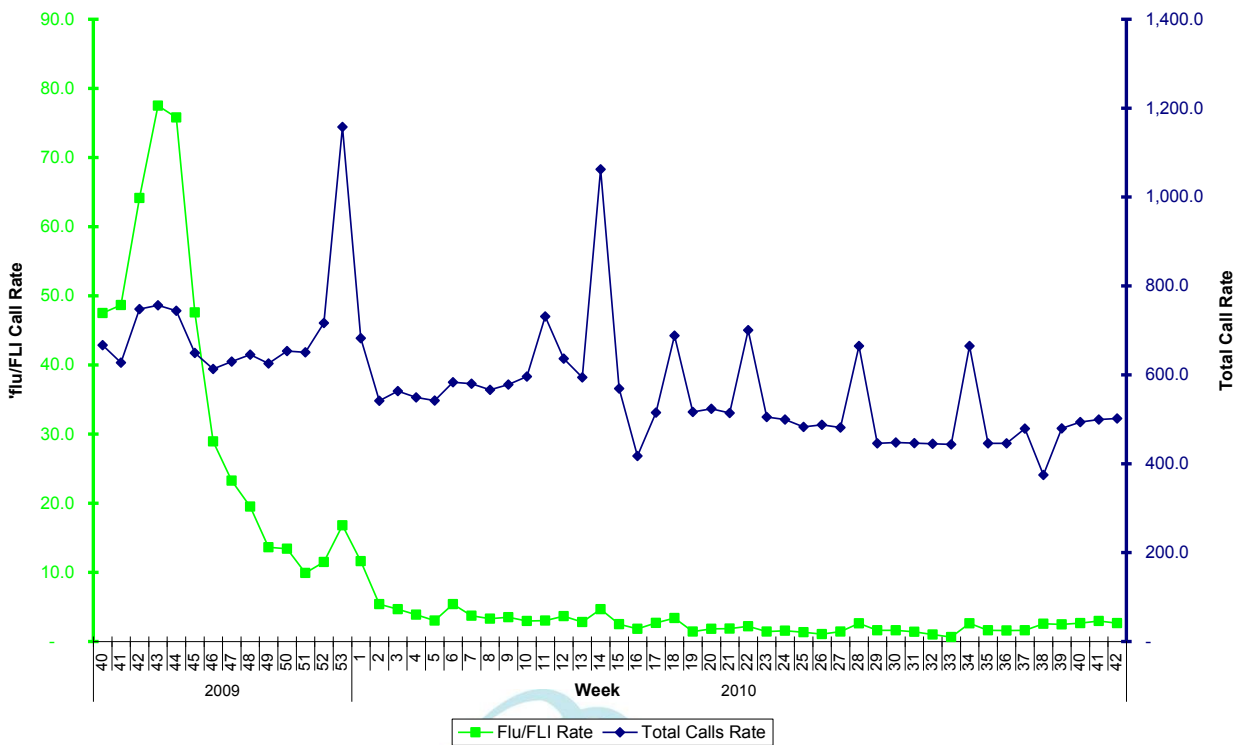
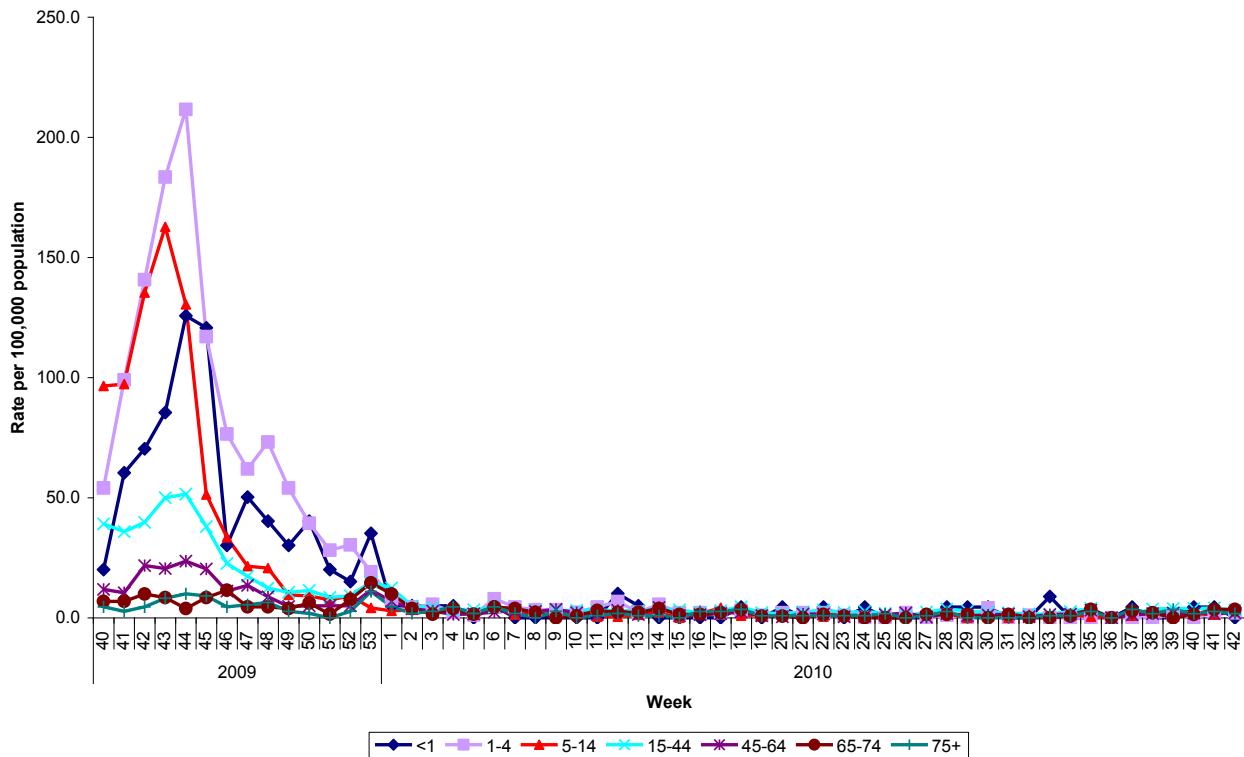


Figure 6: OOH call rates of flu and flu-like illness by age group from Wk 40 2009



Comments

Overall OOH call rates for flu/FLI remain similar to Wk 40 (2.6/100,000) at 3.0/100,000 population in Wk 41 and 2.6 per 100,000 population in Wk 42. Age specific rates remain low and stable.

Note:

- Data from week 15 onwards represents all 7 OOH databases.
- OOH charts in previous bulletins were based on numbers or proportions of calls whereas these are based on rates of calls per 100,000 population.

Virology data

Table 1: Virus activity in Northern Ireland Wks 41 and 42 2010

Source	Specimens Tested	(H1N1) 2009	Influenza B	RSV	Total influenza Positive	% Influenza Positive
Sentinel	13	1	0	0	1	8%
Non-Sentinel	112	0	0	2	0	0
Total	125	1	0	2	1	1%

Table 2: Cumulative total Wk 40–Wk 42 2010

	(H1N1) 2009	Flu B	RSV	Total
0–4	0	0	2	2
5–14	0	0	0	0
15–64	1	0	0	1
65+	0	0	0	0
Unknown	0	0	0	0
All ages	1	0	2	3

Table 3: Cumulative total Wk 40–Wk 42 2010

AGE	Sentinel				Non-Sentinel			
	(H1N1) 2009	Flu B	RSV	Total	(H1N1) 2009	Flu B	RSV	Total
0–4	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
5–14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15–64	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
65+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
All ages	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	2

Note

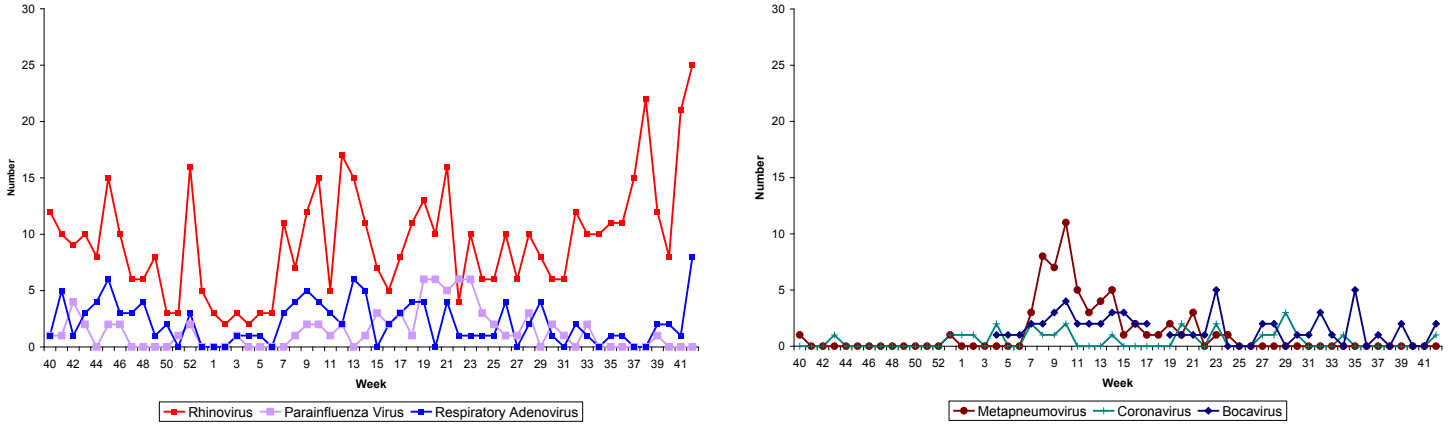
All virology data is provisional. Positive specimens refer to the date of specimen, however number of specimens tested refers to the date of laboratory reports and not the date the specimen was received by the laboratory. Sentinel samples are tested for flu A including influenza A (H1N1) 2009, flu B, and RSV. Non-Sentinel samples are tested for the above, plus: bocavirus, coronavirus, metapneumovirus, parainfluenza, respiratory adenovirus and rhinovirus.

Comments

There were 125 specimens (13 Sentinel) submitted for testing to the Regional Virus Laboratory in Wks 41 and 42. One Sentinel sample tested positive for Influenza A (H1N1) 2009 in Wk 41.

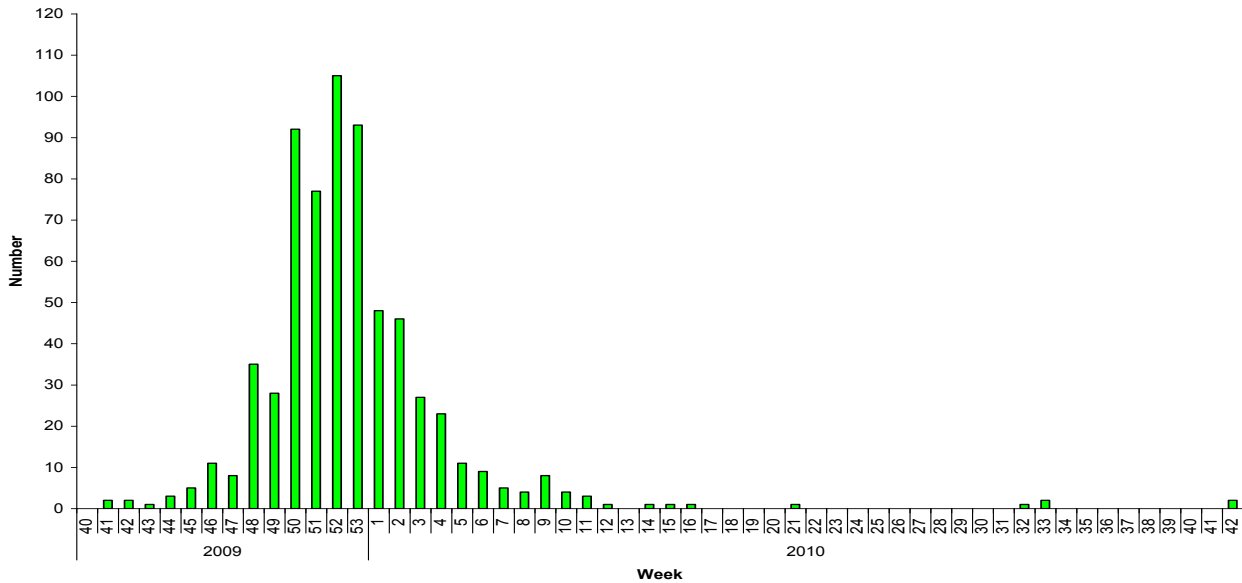
Other respiratory viruses

Figure 7: Weekly cases of other respiratory viruses in Northern Ireland from Wk 40 2009, excluding RSVs



Note: Bocavirus was not part of the standard respiratory panel prior to 2010.

Figure 8: Weekly cases of RSV viruses in Northern Ireland from Wk 40 2009



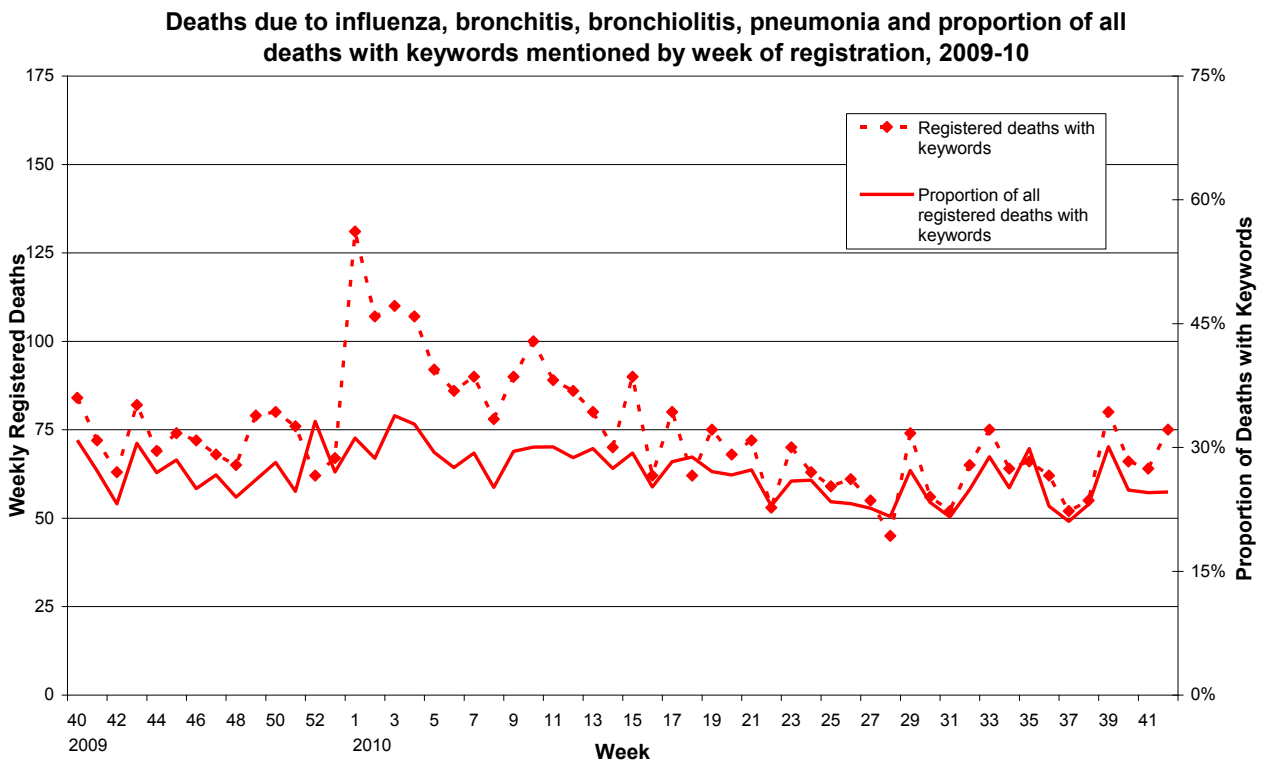
Comments

There were 58 other respiratory viruses recorded in Wks 41 and 42. RSV detections remain low with two RSV detections in Wk 42. Over the two week period rhinovirus predominated and accounted for 79% (n=46) of all detections. There were also nine respiratory adenovirus, two bocavirus and one coronavirus detections in Wks 41 and 42.

Mortality data

Weekly mortality data is provided from Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. The data relates to the number of deaths from selected respiratory infections (some of which may be attributable to influenza, and other respiratory infections or complications thereof) registered each week in Northern Ireland. This is not necessarily the same as the number of deaths occurring in that period. Searches of the medical certificates of the cause of death are performed using a number of keywords that could be associated with influenza (bronchiolitis, bronchitis, influenza and pneumonia). Death registrations containing these keywords are presented as a proportion of all registered deaths.

Figure 9: Weekly registered deaths



Comments:

The proportion of deaths related to respiratory keywords over this period remained similar to previous weeks at 25%. In Wk 41 and 42 there were 566 registered deaths of which 139 related to these specific respiratory infections.

Further information

Further information on influenza is available at the following websites:

www.hpa.org.uk

www.publichealth.hscni.net

www.who.int

<http://ecdc.europa.eu>

<http://euroflu.org>

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

England, Scotland and Wales:

www.hpa.org.uk/Topics/InfectiousDiseases/InfectionsAZ/SeasonalInfluenza/EpidemiologicalData/

Republic of Ireland:

www.ndsc.ie/hpsc/

For further information on the Enhanced Surveillance of Influenza in Northern Ireland scheme or to be added to the circulation list for this bulletin please contact:

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