

## Influenza Weekly Surveillance Bulletin

Northern Ireland, Week 40 (2 – 8 October 2010)

Initially this bulletin will be released on a bi-weekly basis. However once flu activity begins to increase it will be produced on a weekly basis.

As the season develops additional charts and tables will be added where necessary.

### Summary

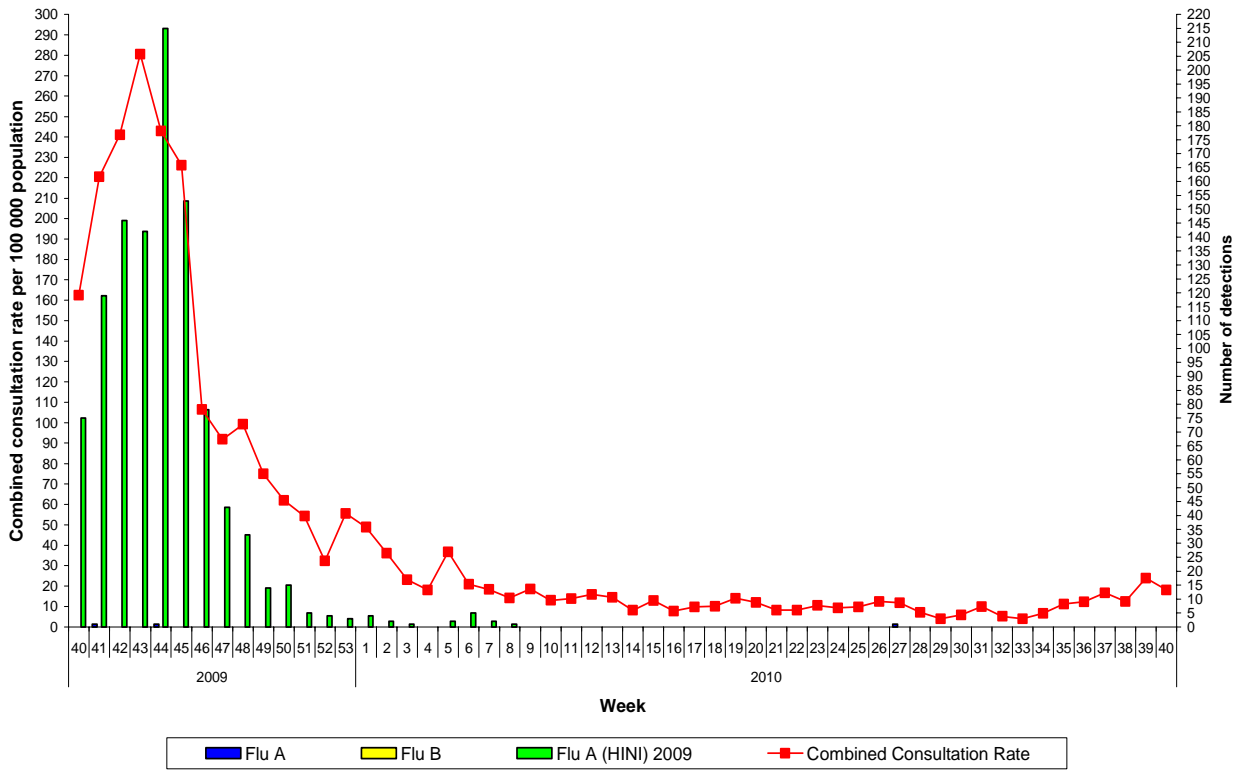
- GP consultation rates for combined 'flu/ FLI decreased from 23.9 in Wk 39 to 18.1/100,000 population in Wk 40. Rates in Wk 40 are much lower compared to the same week last year but similar to those of 2008 and continue to remain well below the Northern Ireland threshold (70/100,000 population).
- There were no RSV detections in Wk 40.
- Out of Hours 'flu/FLI call rates remain stable and low.
- No new Flu A (H1N1) 2009 (Swine flu) detections in Wk 40 (unchanged since Wk 8 2010).
- No new Flu A (H1N1) 2009 related deaths since Wk 3.
- Following case reviews an additional Flu A (H1N1) 2009 related death has come to light. This brings the total Flu A (H1N1) 2009 related deaths to 19.

### Internationally

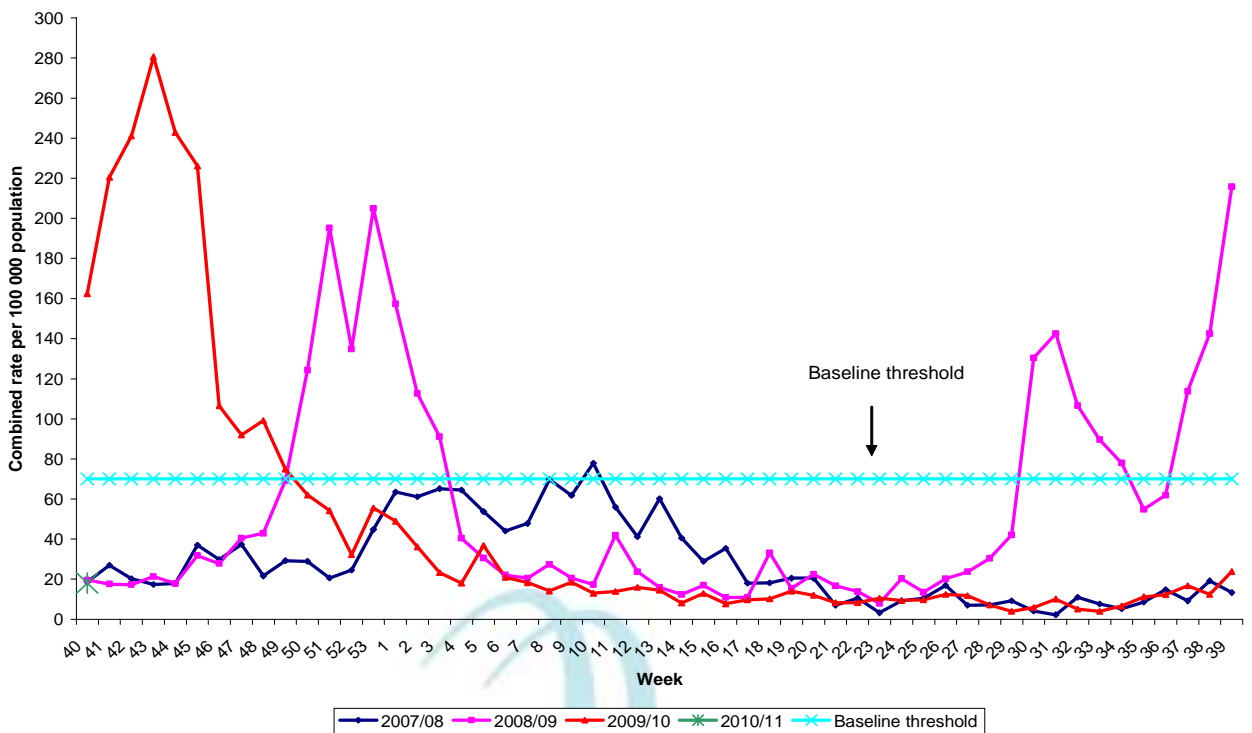
- In Chile, influenza activity seems to have peaked in recent weeks and has started to decrease (week 38). The proportion of respiratory samples tested which were positive for respiratory viruses remained high in week 38 (30%); with co-circulation of H1N1 2009, A (H3N2) and influenza B. Detections of RSV are decreasing. The Chilean influenza season usually occurs in August-September; a similar late season was observed in 2002 when influenza A (H1N1) and B were circulating.
- In India, there is widespread persistence of active influenza virus circulation, but in all but a few states, overall influenza activity appears to be stable or declining. Influenza H1N1 (2009) virus continues to be the predominant circulating influenza virus in India.
- In southern China, Hong Kong and, to a lesser extent, northern China, there has been an increasing re-emergence of circulating seasonal influenza H3N2 viruses since July 2010. In Thailand, there has been active circulation of influenza H1N1 (2009) viruses and to a lesser extent seasonal influenza type B and H3N2 viruses since mid-July 2010.

## Sentinel GP Consultation Data

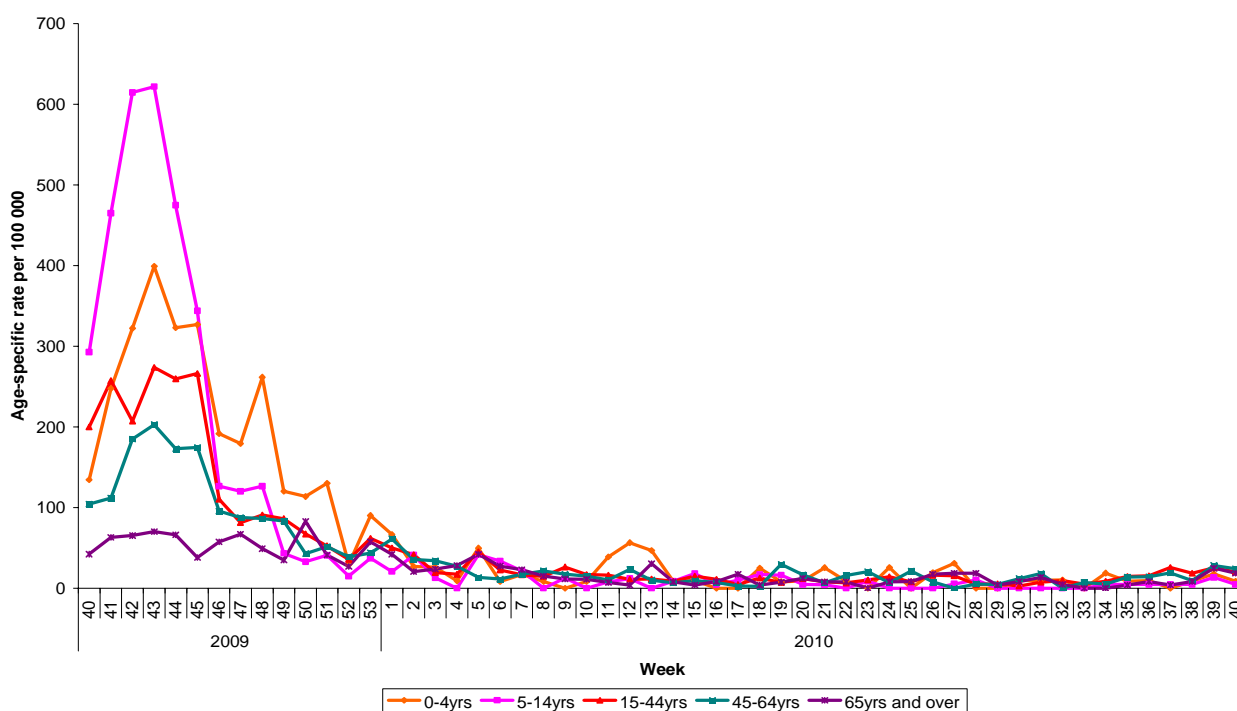
**Figure 1. Sentinel GP consultation rate for combined 'flu and 'flu-like illness and number of virology 'flu detections from Wk 40 2009**



**Figure 2. Sentinel GP consultation rate for combined 'flu and 'flu-like illness 2007/08 - 2010/11**



**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 has decreased from 23.9 in Wk 39 to 18.1 in Wk 40 (24% decrease). Rates for Wk 40 are much lower than the same week last year but broadly similar to those of 2008, 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 40 in the 45-64 year age group.

## Out-of-Hours (OOH) Centres Call Data

Figure 4. OOH Call rates for 'flu and flu-like illness 2009/10 v 2010/11

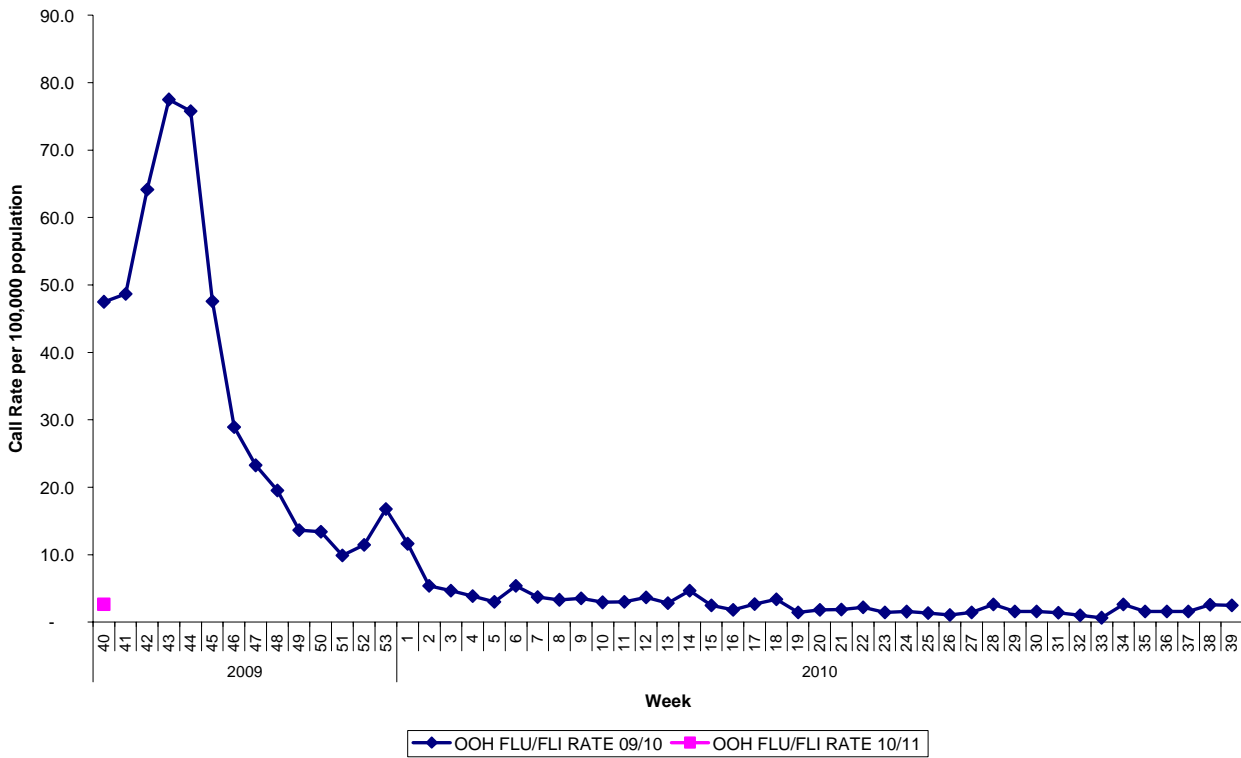
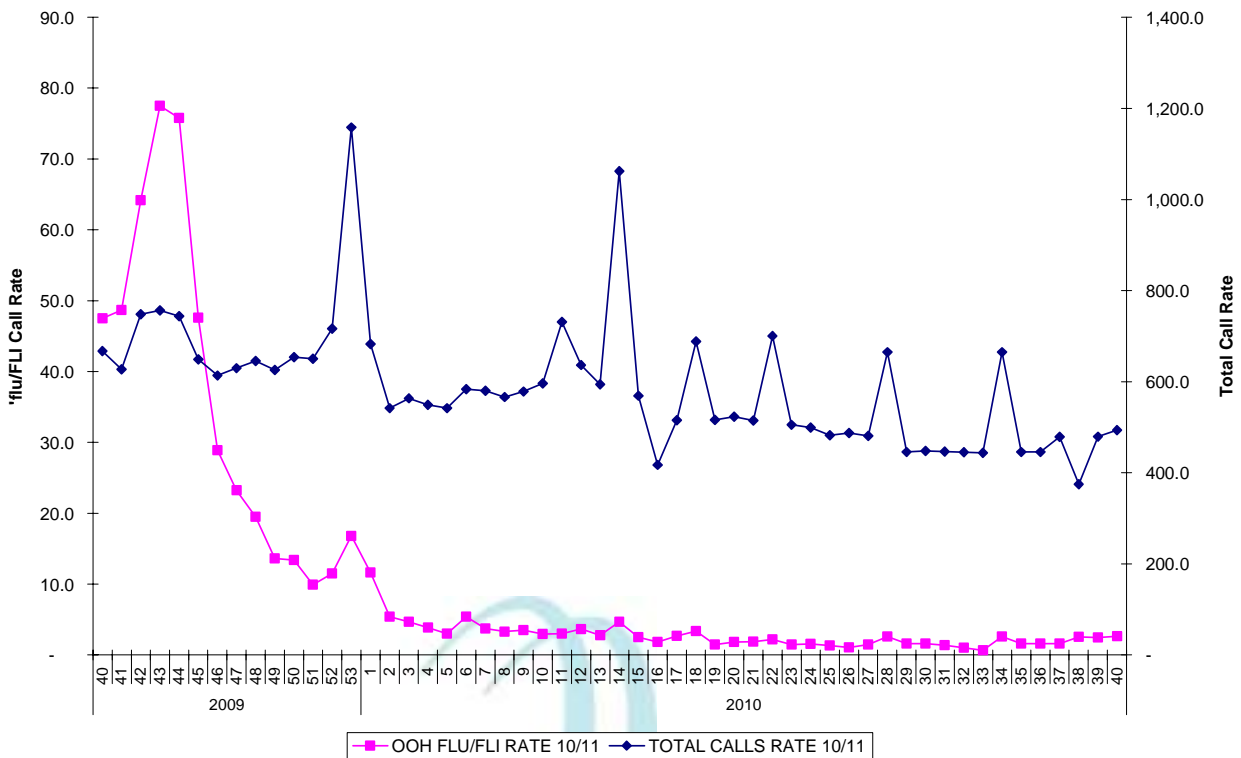
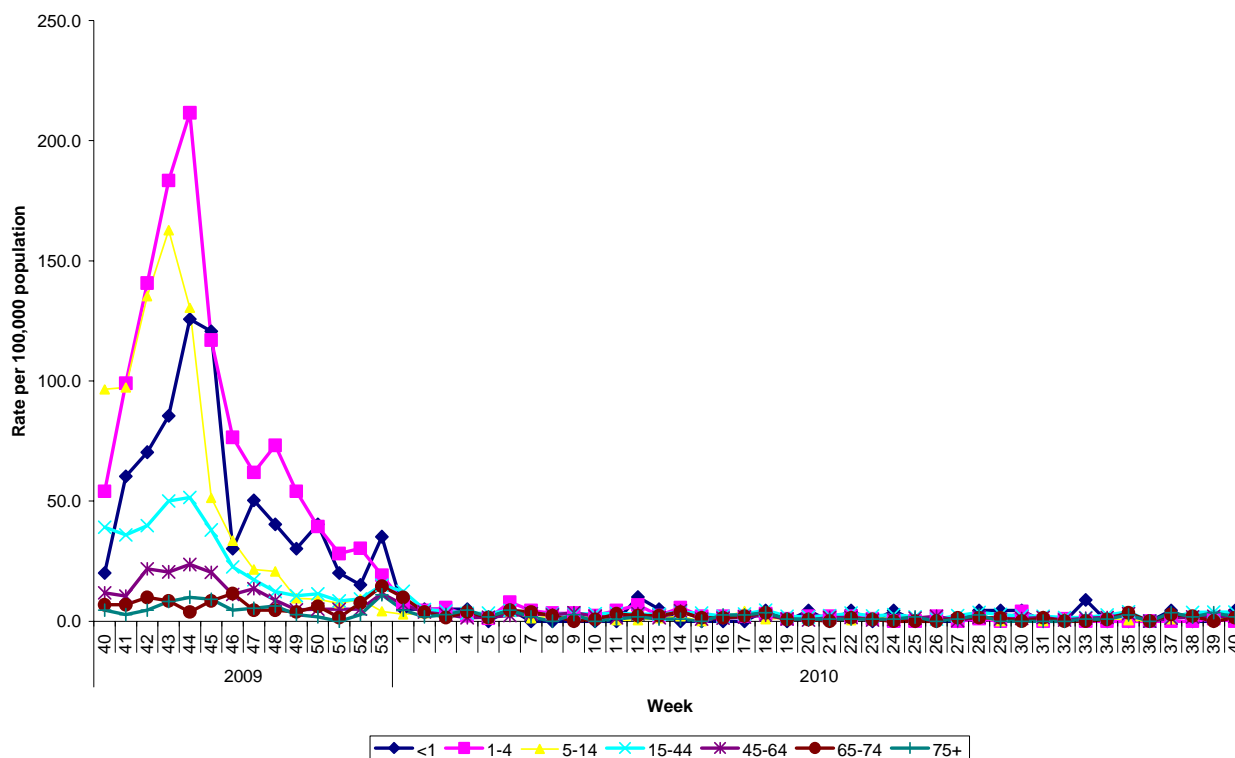


Figure 5. OOH Total call rate (all diagnoses) and call rate for 'flu and flu-like illness from Week 40 2009



**Figure 6. OOH Call rates of 'flu and flu-like illness by age-group from Wk40 2009**



**Comments**

Overall OOH Call rates for 'flu/FLI remain low (2.6 per 100,000 population). Age specific rates are also low with the highest being in the 15-44 age group (3.9 per 100,000 population). The less than 1 year age group combined rate was slightly higher, but this represented only 1 call.

Both total and 'flu/FLI call rates remain well below that of the same period last year.

**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 Wk 40 2010

| Source       | Specimens Tested | Influenza A |           | Influenza B | RSV      | Total influenza Positive | % Influenza Positive |
|--------------|------------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|----------|--------------------------|----------------------|
|              |                  | Seasonal    | H1N1 2009 |             |          |                          |                      |
| Sentinel     | 0                | 0           | 0         | 0           | 0        | 0                        | 0                    |
| Non-sentinel | 40               | 0           | 0         | 0           | 0        | 0                        | 0                    |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>40</b>        | <b>0</b>    | <b>0</b>  | <b>0</b>    | <b>0</b> | <b>0</b>                 | <b>0</b>             |

### 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

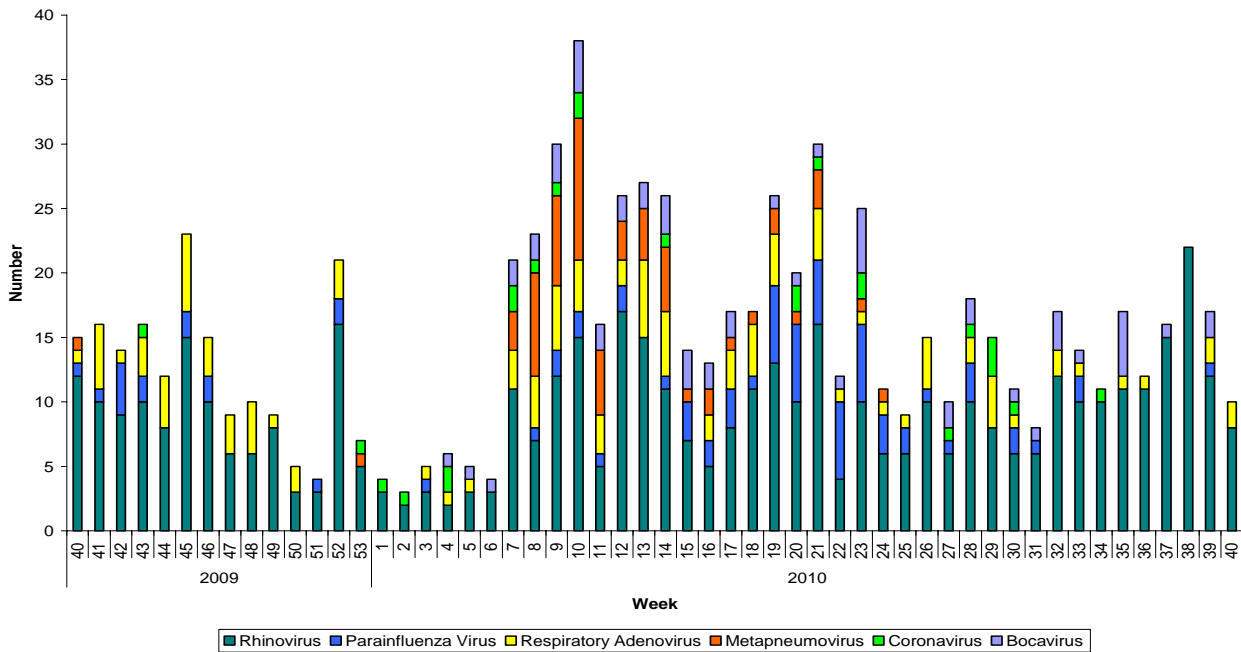
The number of specimens submitted for testing remains low. There were no samples that tested positive for Influenza A (H1N1) 2009 in Wk 40.

The last laboratory confirmed Influenza A (H1N1) 2009 detection was in Wk 8 2010.

During Wk 40 a total of 40 specimens were tested by the Regional Virus Laboratory.

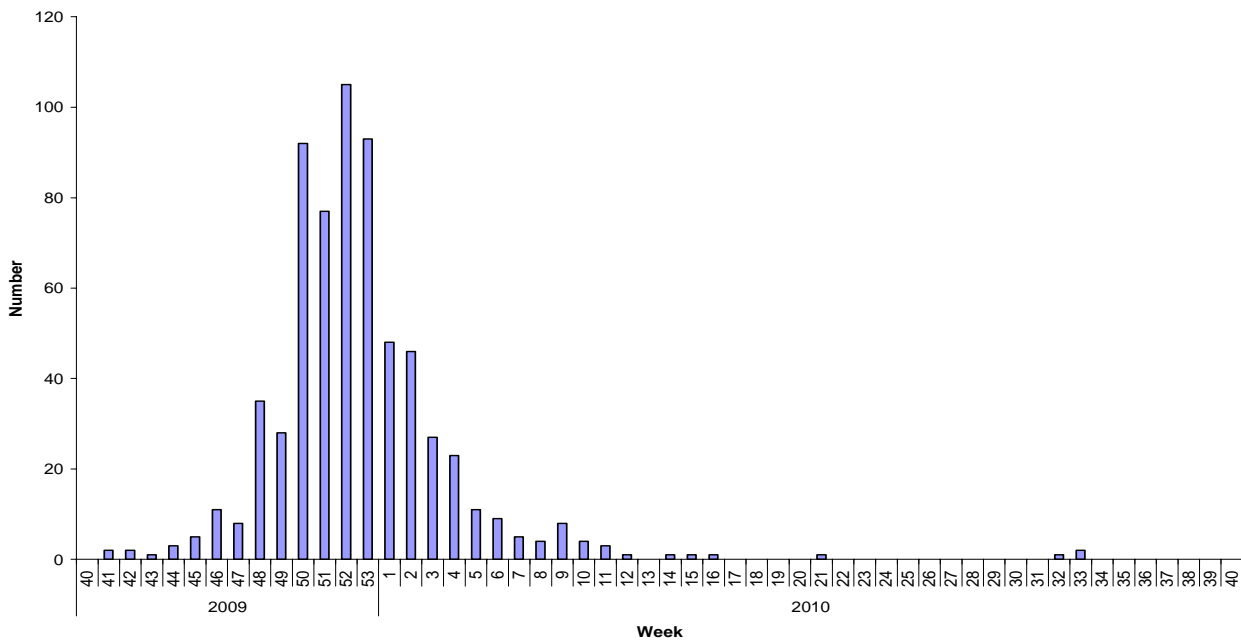
## Other respiratory viruses

**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**



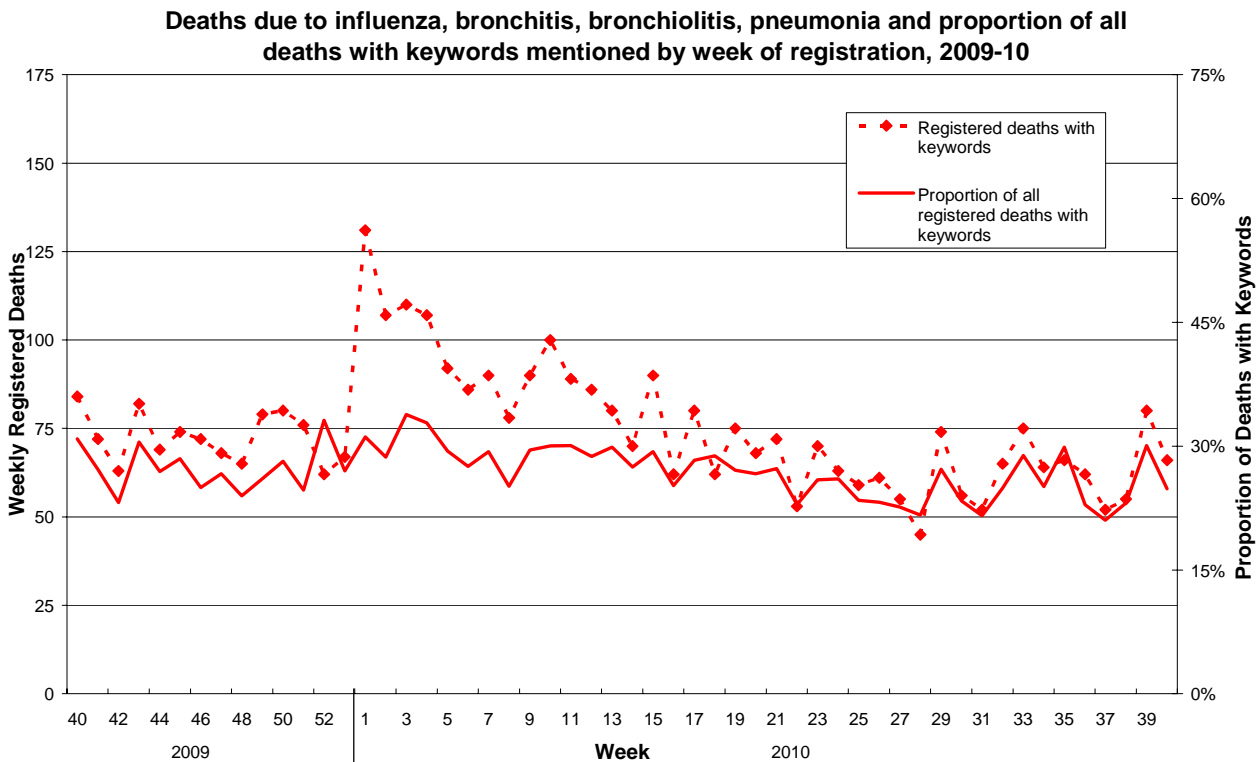
### Comments

There were 10 other respiratory viruses recorded in Wk 40. There were no RSV detections and there have been none since Wk33. In Wk 40, rhinovirus predominated and accounted for 80% (n=8) of all detections. There were also two respiratory adenovirus detections.

## 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:

Following case reviews an additional Influenza A (H1N1) 2009 related death has come to light, this brings the total number of Influenza A (H1N1) 2009 deaths to 19.

No new Flu A (H1N1) 2009 related deaths since Wk 3.

The proportion of deaths related to respiratory keywords over this period remained similar to previous weeks at 25%. In Wk 40 there were 266 registered deaths of which 66 related to these specific respiratory infections.

Note: The definition of a Influenza A (H1N1) 2009 related death is: "Death caused directly by Influenza A (H1N1) 2009 (Part I of the death certificate); Influenza A (H1N1) 2009 contributed to death (Part II of death certificate) and/or patient tested positive for Influenza A (H1N1) 2009.

## Further information

Further information on Influenza A (H1N1) 2009 is available at the following websites:

<http://www.hpa.org.uk>

<http://www.publichealth.hscni.net>

<http://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:

<http://www.hpa.org.uk/Topics/InfectiousDiseases/InfectionsAZ/SeasonalInfluenza/EpidemiologicalData/>

Republic of Ireland:

<http://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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## Acknowledgements

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**This report was compiled by Cathriona Kearns, Paul Cabrey, and Dr. Brian Smyth.**