

# Influenza Surveillance in Ireland – Weekly Report

Influenza Week 26 2020 (22<sup>nd</sup> June – 28<sup>th</sup> June 2020)



 **Intensive Care Society of Ireland**

## Summary

The sentinel GP Influenza-like illness (ILI) consultation rate slightly increased during week 26 2020 to 4.5 per 100,000 compared to an updated rate of 2.8 per 100,000 in week 25 2020. The ILI rate slightly increased the past week but remains below baseline (18.07 per 100,000). The ILI rate has now been below baseline for eight continuous weeks. The ILI rate peaked during week 12 with a rate of 187.6 per 100,000 this was reflective of the current COVID-19 pandemic rather than influenza, please see [HPSC COVID-19 webpage](#) for current reports on COVID-19 activity in Ireland.

**Influenza-like illness (ILI):** The sentinel GP influenza-like illness (ILI) consultation rate was 4.5 per 100,000 population in week 26 2020 and remains below baseline for eight continuous weeks (04//05/2020-28/06/2020) (figure 1).

- During week 26, 46 (80.7%) of the 57 sentinel GP practices reported data (223,054 reporting population)
- ILI age specific rate was highest in those aged  $\geq 65$  years (10.0 per 100,000) 5-14 years, (6.3/100,000) 15-64 years (3.4/100,000) and was not detected in those aged 0-4 years.
- On the 09/03/2020, GP consultations for ILI changed from face to face consultations to phone consultations. Since the 7<sup>th</sup> May, all cases with at least one of the following: cough, fever, shortness of breath are referred for COVID-19 testing. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> June sudden onset of anosmia, ageusia or dysgeusia were added to the case definition. Please refer to HPSC [COVID-19 case definition](#) webpage for further information.
- **GP Out of Hours:** The proportion of influenza-related calls to GP Out-of-Hours services was 0.2% and remains at low levels. Four services provided data for Week 26 (figure 3)
- **National Virus Reference Laboratory (NVRL)**
  - No influenza positive non-sentinel specimens were reported by the NVRL (340 samples were tested) during week 26 2020 or for the previous eight weeks.
  - Due to the testing demand of COVID-19, influenza testing in sentinel GP specimens ceased at the end of March and specimens are being tested retrospectively.
- **Hospitalisations and Critical Care admissions:** During week 26 2020, the HPSC received no notifications for confirmed influenza hospitalisations or admissions to ICU. For the 2019/2020 season to date, 4327 confirmed influenza hospitalised cases have been notified and 152 confirmed influenza cases have been reported as admitted to ICU.
- **Influenza notifications:** During week 26, 12 influenza cases were notified to HPSC, all were late notifications for weeks 12 and 13. For the 2019/2020 season to date, 11,138 confirmed influenza cases have been notified to HPSC.
- **Mortality:** During week 26, no deaths in notified influenza cases were reported to HPSC. During the 2019/2020 season to date, 106 deaths have been reported to HPSC in notified influenza cases.
- **Outbreaks:** No outbreaks of influenza were reported to the HPSC during week 26 2020. During the 2019/2020 season to date, 107 influenza outbreaks were reported to HPSC.
- **International:** For international updates on influenza activity in the European Regions please refer to [ECDC](#) and [Flu News Europe](#). For updates on the current influenza epidemiological and virology data from WHO please refer to [WHO](#)
  - WHO vaccine strain selection committee issued recommendations for the composition of influenza virus vaccines for use in the 2020-2021 northern hemisphere influenza season, please see [WHO Vaccine](#) Recommendations for further information.

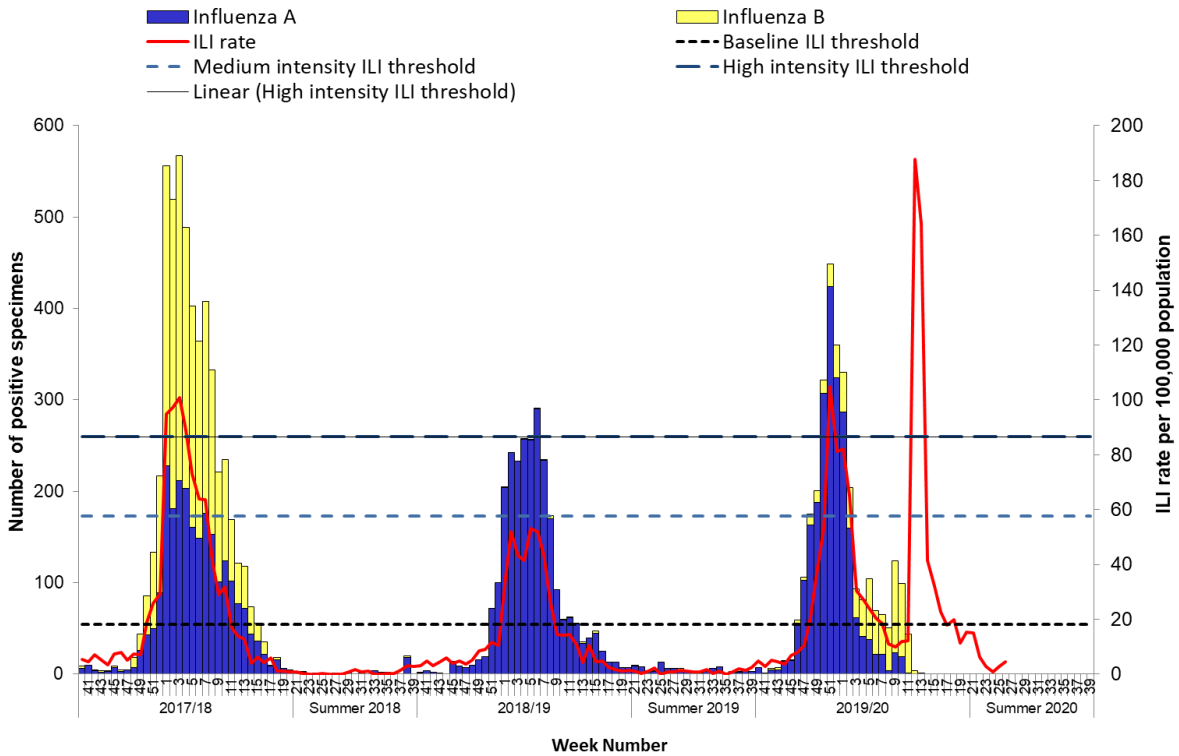


Figure 1: ILI sentinel GP consultation rates per 100,000 population, baseline ILI threshold, medium and high intensity ILI thresholds\* and number of positive influenza A and B specimens tested by the NVRL, by influenza week and season. Source: ICGP and NVRL

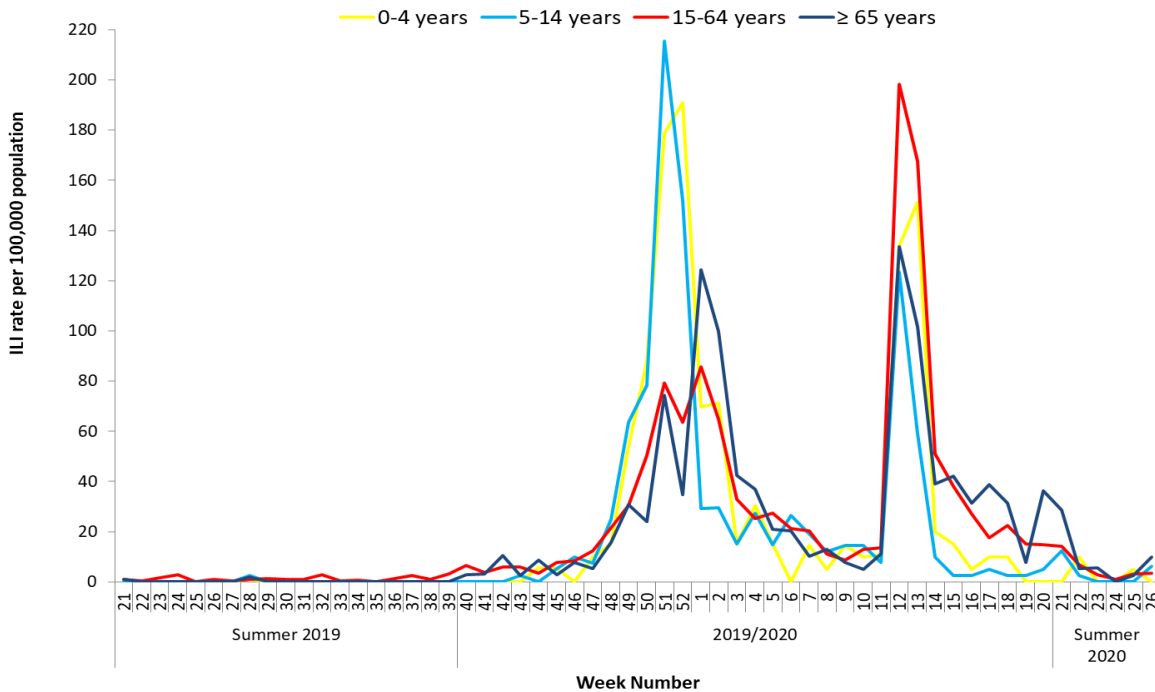
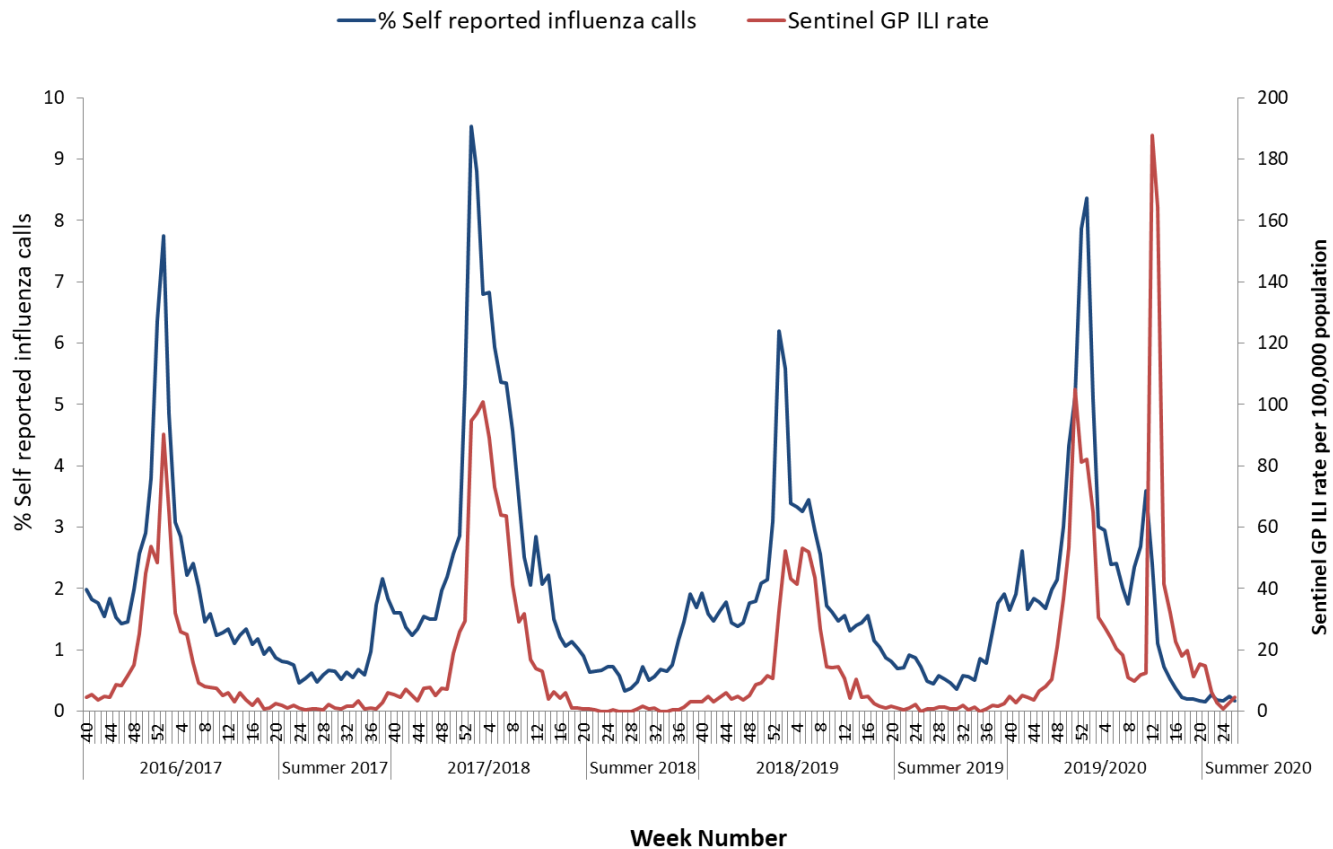


Figure 2: Age specific sentinel GP ILI consultation rate per 100,000 population by week during the summer of 2019 and the 2019/2020 influenza season to date. Source: ICGP

\* For further information on the Moving Epidemic Method (MEM) to calculate ILI thresholds: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22897919>



**Figure 3: Self-reported influenza-related calls as a proportion of total calls to Out-of-Hours GP Co-ops and sentinel GP ILI consultation rate per 100,000 population by week and season. Source: GP Out-Of-Hours services in Ireland (collated by HSE-NE) & ICGP.**

Further information on influenza in Ireland is available at [www.hpsc.ie](http://www.hpsc.ie)

#### Acknowledgements

This report was prepared by Maeve Mc Enery, Meabhdh Hunt and Suzanne Cotter, HPSC.

HPSC wishes to thank the sentinel GPs, the ICGP, NVRL, Departments of Public Health, ICSI and HSE-NE for providing data for this report.