

Influenza Surveillance in Ireland – Weekly Report

Influenza Week 36 2020 (31st August – 6th September 2020)



 **Intensive Care Society of Ireland**

Summary

The sentinel GP Influenza-like illness (ILI) consultation rate increased during week 36 2020 to 28.2 per 100,000 compared to an updated rate of 23.4 per 100,000 in week 35 2020. The ILI rate is above baseline (18.07 per 100,000) for the second time since week 18 (week ending 3rd May 2020). The gradual increase in ILI in recent weeks is likely reflective of the current COVID-19 pandemic rather than influenza, please see [HPSC webpage](#) for current reports on COVID-19 activity in Ireland.

Influenza-like illness (ILI): The sentinel GP influenza-like illness (ILI) consultation rate was 28.2 per 100,000 population in week 36, 2020. During week 36, 49 (84.5%) of the 58 sentinel GP practices reported data (226,989 reporting population)

- ILI age specific rate was highest in those aged 5-14 years (62.1 per 100,000) and those aged 0-4 years (38.0 per 100,000) and lowest in those aged 15-44 years (21.5 per 100,000) and ≥65 years (19.7 per 100,000).
- On the 09/03/2020, GP consultations for ILI changed from face to face consultations to phone consultations. Since the 7th May, all cases with at least one of the following: cough, fever, shortness of breath are referred for COVID-19 testing. On the 3rd June sudden onset of anosmia, ageusia or dysgeusia were added to the case definition. Please refer to HPSC [COVID-19 case definition](#) webpage.
- **GP Out of Hours:** The proportion of influenza-related calls to GP Out-of-Hours services was 1.1% and remains at low levels. Five services provided data for Week 36 (figure 3).
- **National Virus Reference Laboratory (NVRL)**
 - No positive influenza non-sentinel specimens were reported (89 specimens tested) by the NVRL during week 36 2020.
 - Influenza testing in sentinel GP specimens ceased at the end of March.
- **Hospitalisations and Critical Care admissions:** During week 36 2020, the HPSC received no notifications for confirmed influenza hospitalisations or admissions to ICU. For the 2019/2020 season to date, 4332 confirmed influenza hospitalised cases have been notified and 154 confirmed influenza cases have been reported as admitted to ICU.
- **Influenza notifications:** During week 36, the HPSC received no notifications for confirmed influenza cases. For the 2019/2020 season to date, 11,143 confirmed influenza cases have been notified to HPSC.
- **Mortality:** During week 36, no deaths in notified influenza cases were reported to HPSC. During the 2019/2020 season to date, 110 deaths have been reported to HPSC in notified influenza cases.
- **Outbreaks:** No outbreaks of influenza were reported to the HPSC during week 36 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.

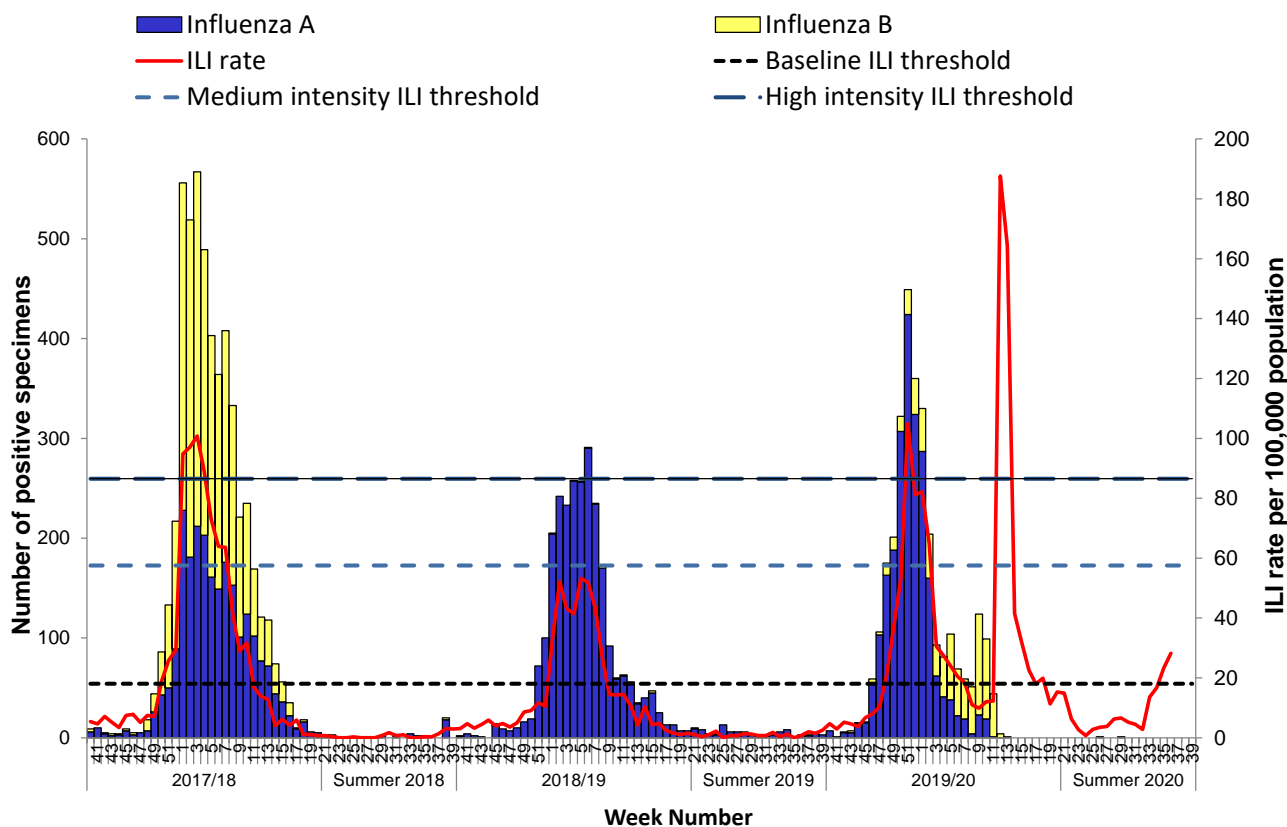


Figure 1: ILI sentinel GP consultation rates per 100,000 population, baseline ILI threshold, medium and high intensity ILI thresholds* and number of positive influenza A and B specimens tested by the NVRL, by influenza week and season. *Source: ICGP and NVRL*

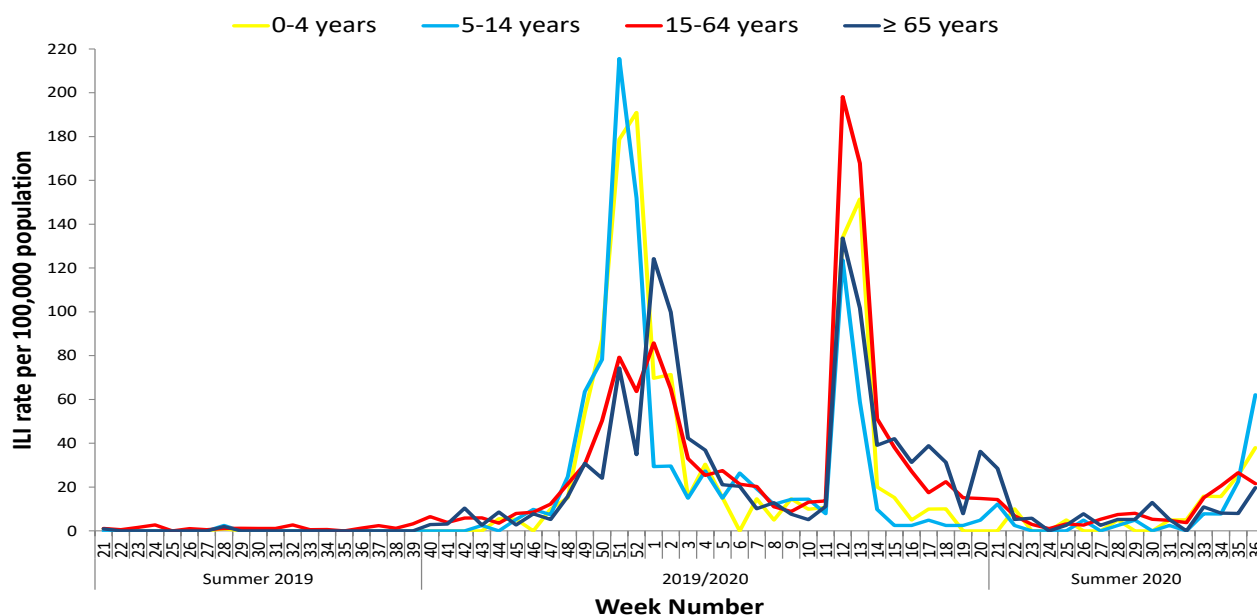


Figure 2: Age specific sentinel GP ILI consultation rate per 100,000 population by week during the summer of 2019 and the 2019/2020 influenza season to date. *Source: ICGP*

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

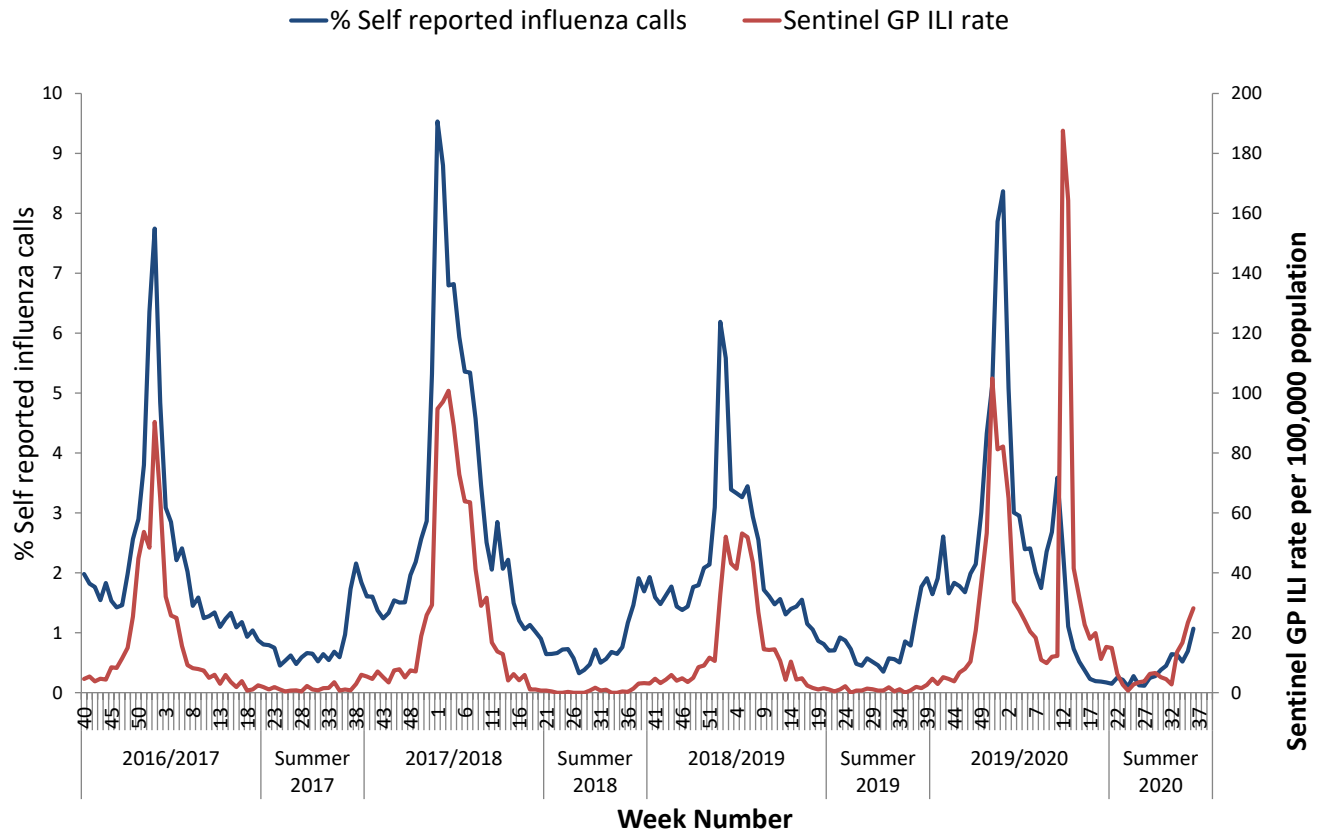


Figure 3: Self-reported influenza-related calls as a proportion of total calls to Out-of-Hours GP Co-ops and sentinel GP ILI consultation rate per 100,000 population by week and season. Source: GP Out-Of-Hours services in Ireland (collated by HSE-NE) & ICGP.

Further information on influenza in Ireland is available at www.hpsc.ie

Acknowledgements

This report was prepared by Piaras O’Lorcain, Eva Kelly, Adele McKenna 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.