Virus WAtch

Week ending 29th November 2020

Key Points

It is important to note that the influenza and ILI surveillance systems in WA have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore interpretation of 2020 influenza and ILI activity should be done with caution and needs to take into account the effects of changes in health seeking behaviour including accessing alternate health services such as telehealth, focused testing for COVID-19 at COVID-19 clinics or specific acute respiratory infection clinics and the impact of physical distancing measures.

Influenza and influenza-like illnesses (ILI)

- **Summary**: Indicators of influenza activity remain at or below interseasonal levels.
- ILI activity at sentinel EDs remained within the upper range of levels usually reported for this time of year. ILI activity at sentinel GPs remains below levels usually seen at this time of year.
- There were no positive influenza samples reported by PathWest in the past week.
- RSV detections remained higher than usually reported at this time of year.

Gastroenteritis

- Gastroenteritis presentations at sentinel GPs increased this week and are in the upper range of levels normally reported at this time of year. The rate of gastroenteritis presentations at sentinel EDs remained in the lower range.
- PathWest laboratory detections of norovirus increased in the past week, and rotavirus notifications remained at low levels.

Other vaccine-preventable diseases

- **Shingles and chickenpox**: Shingles presentations at sentinel GPs and EDs were above baseline this week..
- **Measles**: No measles cases were notified in the past week.
- **Mumps**: No mumps cases were notified in the past week.
- **Rubella**: No rubella cases were notified in the past week.
- **Invasive meningococcal disease (IMD)**: No IMD cases were notified in the past week.

Other diseases

- **Coronavirus COVID-19**: As of 2 December 2020, a total of 823 COVID-19 cases have been confirmed in WA. See [webpage](http://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/F_I/Infectious-disease-data/Virus-WAtch) for further information.
Influenza and influenza-like illnesses

The rate of ILI presentations to sentinel GPs in the past week remains in the lower range of levels usually reported at this time of year. There were no samples submitted for influenza testing by sentinel GPs in the past week.

The following is a summary of current Emergency Department Sentinel Surveillance (EDSS) data for respiratory viral presentations.

Respiratory viral presentations and admissions to sentinel EDs decreased in the past week.
The graph is a summary of presentations at Emergency Department Sentinel Surveillance (EDSS) sites using the ICD codes B34.9 and J06.9 which are consistent with a clinical presentation of a viral illness. This data may differ from that presented in the Winter Respiratory Illness Report provided by the Information and System Performance Directorate.

The number of respiratory viral presentations to sentinel EDs was in the upper range of levels usually reported at this time of the year.

The graph is a summary of all influenza notifications received by the DoH, Western Australia to the end of the current reporting week, for which cases had date of symptom onset or specimen collection between 23/11/2020 and 29/11/2020. The seasonal threshold defines a value above which may indicate epidemic seasonal influenza activity. The threshold value is calculated based on analysis of seasonal influenza data from the past four years.

Influenza notifications reported to the Department of Health in the past week remain below the seasonal threshold. No influenza notifications were received by the Department of Health in the past week.
The graph is a summary of all WA samples reported by PathWest, excluding samples referred by other private laboratories for influenza subtyping.

The percentage of specimens positive for influenza virus at PathWest remains below levels usually reported at this time of year. None of the 492 specimens submitted for influenza testing were positive for influenza in the past week.

The graph is a summary of all WA samples positive for influenza reported at PathWest, excluding samples referred by other private laboratories for influenza subtyping. *

These samples were tested using a rapid testing method that does not determine the influenza subtype (i.e. influenza A/H3N2 or A/H1N1).

No PCR positive influenza samples have been reported by PathWest since July.
RSV detections increased again this week and are higher than usually reported at this time of year.

COVID-19 activity remains low in Western Australia. All recently reported cases were acquired overseas.
Gastroenteritis presentations to sentinel GPs are in the upper range of values usually reported at this time of year.

Gastroenteritis presentations and admissions to sentinel EDs in the past week remain at or below baseline levels.
The number of gastroenteritis presentations to sentinel EDs remain well below the range of values normally reported at this time of year.

Viral rashes

No chickenpox presentations were reported by sentinel GPs in the past five weeks. Shingles presentations remained above baseline levels.
The following is a summary of current Emergency Department sentinel surveillance (EDSS) data for varicella-zoster virus presentations.

Baseline levels for varicella-zoster virus presentations were calculated using the mean of weekly EDIS data from week 1, 2015 to week 52, 2019.

Chickenpox presentations at sentinel EDs were below baseline levels in the past week. Shingles presentations returned to above baseline levels this week.

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