Virus WAth

Week ending 13th December 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 increased in the past week and was higher than levels usually reported at this time of year.

Gastroenteritis

- Gastroenteritis presentations at sentinel GPs were in the lower range of levels normally reported at this time of year. The rate of gastroenteritis presentations at sentinel EDs was also below baseline levels.
- 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 were below baseline levels but above baseline levels at sentinel EDs. Chickenpox presentations at sentinel GPs and EDs were below baseline levels 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 17 December 2020, a total of 842 COVID-19 cases have been confirmed in WA. See webpage for further information.

Current and archived issues of Virus Watch: http://www2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/F_Infectious-disease-data/Virus-WAtch

Virus WAth is a weekly electronic publication by the Communicable Disease Control Directorate (CDCD) and key collaborators. It provides a brief summary of General Practice and Hospital Emergency Department sentinel surveillance data on influenza-like illness, gastroenteritis and varicella-zoster disease, together with relevant laboratory information, to alert health care workers in WA to important circulating viruses. All figures and data were accurate at time of publication, but subject to change. The data collections used to create this publication include:

- Sentinel General Practice (GP) data collected by WA members of the Australian Sentinel Practices Research Network (ASPREN)
- Emergency Department (ED) data provided by the Emergency Department Information System (EDIS), which currently incorporates data from the following hospitals: Fiona Stanley Hospital, Sir Charles Gardiner Hospital, Royal Perth Hospital, Perth Children’s Hospital, King Edward Memorial Hospital, St John of God Midland, Bunbury Hospital, Armadale Hospital, Joondalup Health Campus, and Rockingham General Hospital.
- Notification data derived from disease notifications received by CDCD, WA Department of Health from medical providers and public or private laboratories in WA. These data are updated routinely to include admission status for all public and public/private hospitals in WA and hospitalisation data are included in the report during the influenza season.
- Viral laboratory data obtained from PathWest laboratories at QEII Medical Centre, as well as via notification data sent by all WA laboratories to CDCD, WA Department of Health.

As of 1 August 2020, daily reporting of COVID-19 cases include only confirmed cases diagnosed by nose and throat swabs. See webpage 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.

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.

Respiratory viral presentations to sentinel EDs decreased in the past week while admissions increased.
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.

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 606 specimens submitted for influenza testing were positive for influenza in the past week.

Influenza types and subtypes, 2019 to 2020

No PCR positive influenza samples have been reported by PathWest since July.
RSV detections increased in the past week and was higher than levels usually reported at this time of the year.

COVID-19 activity remains low in Western Australia. All recently reported cases were acquired overseas, with the exception of one case in the past week, which was a locally acquired contact of a confirmed case.
Gastroenteritis presentations to sentinel GPs were in the lower range of values usually reported at this time of year.

**ED gastroenteritis presentations**

This graph is a summary of current EDIS data for gastroenteritis presentations and admissions. Baseline levels for gastroenteritis presentations and admissions were calculated using the mean of weekly EDIS data from week 1, 2015 to week 52, 2019.

Gastroenteritis presentations and admissions to sentinel EDs in the past week were 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**

**GP varicella-zoster virus presentations**

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

**ED 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.

While chickenpox presentations at sentinel EDs were below baseline levels in the past week, shingles presentations were above baseline levels.

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