Virus WAATCH

Week ending 05th April 2020

Key Points

Influenza and influenza-like illnesses (ILI)
- **Summary**: Indicators of influenza activity remain at interseasonal levels.
- ILI activity at sentinel GPs remained low this week and no samples were submitted for influenza testing.
- ILI presentations at sentinel EDs fell this week. This is likely due to decreasing overall ED attendance due to COVID-19 concerns.
- Influenza notifications and PathWest test percent positivity were lower than levels usually reported at this time of year.
- Influenza A accounted for (60%) influenza cases at PathWest in the past week, comprising 40% A/H1, and 20% A/not subtyped*. Influenza B accounted for 20% of cases.
- Overall non-influenza activity increased this week, mostly due to an increase in parainfluenza.

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

Other vaccine-preventable diseases
- **Shingles and chickenpox**: Shingles and chickenpox presentations reported by WA 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 8 April 2020, a total of 481 COVID-19 cases have been confirmed in WA. See [webpage](http://www.health.wa.gov.au) for further information.


Virus WAATCH 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 data collected by WA members of the Australian Sentinel Practices Research Network (ASPREN)
- Emergency Department data provided by the Emergency Department Information System (EDIS), which currently incorporates data from the following hospitals: Fiona Stanley Hospital, Sir Charles Gairdner 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.

*these samples were tested using a rapid testing method that does not determine the influenza subtype (i.e. influenza A/H3N2 or A/H1N1).*
Influenza and influenza-like illnesses

The number of routine PathWest influenza detections remained low this week and there were no samples submitted for influenza testing by sentinel GPs.

The rate of ILI presentations to sentinel GPs in the past week increased and is now at levels usually reported during this time of year.
The following is a summary of current Emergency Department Sentinel Surveillance (EDSS) data for respiratory viral presentations.

Respiratory viral presentations to sentinel EDs fell this week, whilst viral-illness admissions remained steady.

The number of respiratory viral presentations to sentinel EDs fell this week. This is likely due to decreasing overall ED attendance due to COVID-19 concerns.

*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.*
Influenza notifications reported to the Department of Health in the past week remained below the seasonal threshold.

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 30/03/2020 and 05/04/2020. 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.

The percentage of specimens positive for influenza virus at PathWest remains below levels usually reported at this time of year. Of 690 specimens submitted, 10 (1%) tested positive for influenza 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.
Ten positive samples were reported by PathWest in the past week which included 6 influenza A and 4 influenza B. Of the 3 influenza A samples, 4 were A/H1N1, and 2 were A/untyped. The decrease in influenza detections may be partially due to decreased testing of COVID-19 requests for other respiratory viruses.

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).

Overall non-influenza activity increased this week, mostly due to an increase in parainfluenza.

The graph is a summary of all WA samples positive for a common respiratory virus other than influenza reported at PathWest.
Gastroenteritis

The rate of gastroenteritis presentations to sentinel GPs remains in the lower range of levels normally reported at this time of year.

Gastroenteritis presentations and admissions to sentinel EDs in the past week remained below baseline levels this week.

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.
The number of gastroenteritis presentations to sentinel EDs remains in the mid-range of values normally reported at this time of year.

**Viral rashes**

Shingles and chickenpox presentations reported by WA ASPREN GPs this week were below baseline level.

Baseline levels for chickenpox and shingles presentations to WA ASPREN GPs per thousand consultations were calculated using the mean of weekly WA ASPREN data from week 1, 2015 to week 52, 2019.
The following is a summary of current Emergency Department sentinel surveillance (EDSS) data for varicella-zoster virus presentations.

**ED varicella-zoster virus presentations**

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<th>Week ending</th>
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<th>No. of shingles presentations</th>
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Shingles and chickenpox presentations to sentinel EDs were below baseline levels this week.

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

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