Virus WAWatch

Week ending 29th September 2019

Key Points

Influenza and influenza-like illnesses (ILI)

- **Summary**: Indicators of influenza activity were below levels usually reported during this time of year in WA.
- ILI activity at sentinel GPs remained low in the past week.
- ILI presentations and admissions at sentinel EDs decreased in the past week.
- PathWest influenza detections and test percent positivity are at low levels for this time of year.
- Influenza A accounted for 77% of influenza detections at PathWest in the past week, comprising 46% influenza A/H3N2, 23% influenza A/not subtyped and 8% influenza A/H1N1. Influenza B accounted for 23% of detections.
- Overall non-influenza activity decreased this week.

Gastroenteritis

- The number of gastroenteritis presentations to sentinel GPs was higher than values normally reported at this time of year, but the number of presentations to sentinel EDs in the past week was below baseline levels.
- PathWest laboratory detections of norovirus and rotavirus remained at low levels.

Other vaccine-preventable diseases

- **Shingles and chickenpox**: While chickenpox presentations at sentinel EDs were below baseline levels in the past week, shingles presentations were comparable to baseline levels.
- **Measles** (updated cases to 3 October): Eleven measles cases notified, mostly locally acquired.
- **Mumps**: One mumps case was notified in the past week.
- **Rubella**: No rubella cases notified this week.
- **Invasive meningococcal disease (IMD)**: One meningococcal case, serogroup Y was notified in the past week.


Virus WAWatch 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 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.

*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 increased in the past week and one detection was made by sentinel GPs.

The rate of ILI presentations this week was below 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 and admissions to sentinel EDs decreased in the past week.

The number of respiratory viral presentations to sentinel EDs decreased in the past week and was lower than levels usually reported during the winter months, despite high levels reported earlier in 2019.

*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 increased but were equivalent to the seasonal threshold in the past week. 

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 23/09/2019 and 29/09/2019. 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 remained below levels usually reported at this time of year. Of the 358 specimens, 13 (4%) tested positive 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.
Thirteen positive samples were reported by PathWest in the past week comprising: six (46%) influenza A/H3N2, three (23%) influenza B and one (8%) influenza A/H1N1. Three (23%) influenza A samples were not subtyped*.

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 decreased in the past week.

The graph is a summary of all WA samples positive for a common respiratory virus other than influenza reported at PathWest.
The number of gastroenteritis presentations to sentinel GPs in the past week was higher than the values normally reported at this time of year.

Gastroenteritis presentations to sentinel EDs in the past week were below baseline levels.

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, 2014 to week 52, 2018.
The number of gastroenteritis presentations to sentinel EDs remained in the mid-range of values normally reported at this time of year.

**Viral rashes**

**GP varicella-zoster virus presentations**

While chickenpox activity reported by WA ASPREN GPs was below baseline levels in the past week, shingles activity was comparable to baseline levels.

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, 2014 to week 52, 2018.
The following is a summary of current Emergency Department sentinel surveillance (EDSS) data for varicella-zoster virus presentations.

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<th>No. of chickenpox presentations</th>
<th>No. of shingles presentations</th>
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<tr>
<td>22/09/19</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29/09/19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While chickenpox presentations at sentinel EDs were comparable to baseline levels in the past week, shingles presentations decreased and were below baseline levels.

Baseline levels for varicella-zoster virus presentations were calculated using the mean of weekly EDIS data from week 1, 2014 to week 52, 2018.

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