

Daily Update of Influenza Situation

March 14, 2008

(Day 6 of Week 11)

Highlights

1. Since our last Update, there are 10 suspected and 1 confirmed reports of influenza outbreaks. These include 9 secondary schools, 1 childcare centre and 1 residential care home for the elderly (Table 1 and Figure 1). So far, 22 confirmed outbreaks have been recorded this week.
2. Gene sequencing results available today on the 7-year-old boy who died in TMH confirmed that the H1N1 virus in the boy has the same genetic makeup as the circulating H1N1 (Brisbane) strains in Hong Kong. Earlier, gene sequencing results on the 3-year-old girl who died in TMH found that H3N2 virus in the girl has same genetic composition as the circulating H3N2 (Brisbane) strains as well. Both strains have been circulating in different parts of the world during the past few months. These results confirm that the 2 children did not die from a new virus that is more virulent than the circulating strains in the region.
3. While the vast majority of children with influenza recover spontaneously, influenza is also a known cause of complications such as pneumonia, sepsis, myocarditis, encephalopathy, etc. Influenza also not uncommonly causes hospitalizations among children. During the year 2007, a total of approximately 1,400 children aged 12 years or below were hospitalized in hospitals under the Hospital Authority due to influenza (principal diagnosis). About 100 had suffered from more severe conditions including pneumonia, sepsis, myocarditis, encephalopathy or shock.
4. A new influenza surveillance arrangement with public and private

This update is prepared to provide key highlights of the daily flu situation by the Centre for Health Protection with inputs from the Hospital Authority. For more information about influenza, please visit CHP Flu Page.

hospitals has been set up to monitor the number of hospital reports on children aged 12 years or below who have fever, respiratory symptoms, and clinically more severe complications². From March 13-14, a total of 5 children have been reported through this new arrangement. Three had laboratory evidence of influenza infection. Of these three cases, one was discharged yesterday and the other two remain in stable condition.

5. The number of influenza detections has increased this week with 258 detections. Increase in consultations for ILI in sentinel private clinics and general outpatient clinics have also been detected last week (Figures 2-4). The influenza season is expected to persist for some time in Hong Kong.
6. Based on the updated estimation, hospital admission rates due to influenza among children aged 0 to 4 years have shown a significant increase last week. That for elderly 65-year-old or older has been higher than earlier this year but no obvious upsurge detected. Number of attendances at the hospital accident and emergency departments is on the high side. (Figures 5-7).
7. Significant increase in influenza activity has been shown in laboratory surveillance, sentinel surveillance, outbreak monitoring and hospital admissions in the young children. Hong Kong is currently at the height of influenza season, which is expected to last for some period.
8. Health advice for the public in the prevention of influenza:
 - consult their doctors for medical advice promptly if they develop symptoms of respiratory tract infection;
 - maintain good personal and environmental hygiene;
 - wash hands after sneezing or coughing and wear a mask when developing symptoms of respiratory infections;
 - maintain good ventilation;
 - build up good body immunity by having a proper diet, regular exercise and adequate rest, reducing stress and avoiding smoking; and
 - avoid visiting crowded places with poor ventilation, especially during influenza season.

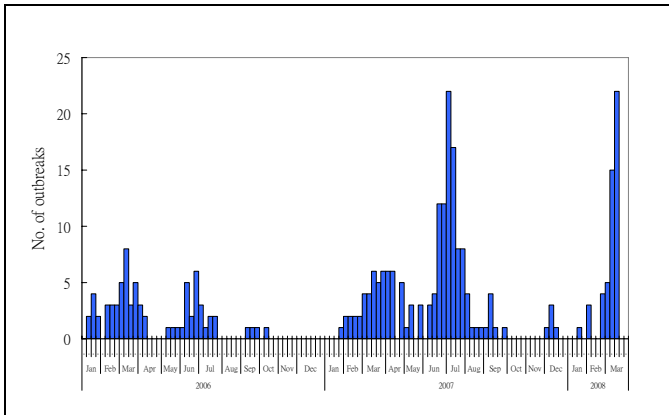
²These complications refer to severe pneumonia, severe sepsis, shock, encephalopathy, or myocarditis.

9. Health advice for institutions include schools and institutions:
- children with fever and respiratory symptoms are strongly advised not to attend school;
 - staff with respiratory illnesses should refrain from work;
 - parents are advised to record the body temperature of their children and hand in the temperature record sheet to the school everyday during the influenza season;
 - residents with fever and respiratory symptoms in institutions should be isolated, and staff with symptoms should refrain from work;
 - persons with respiratory symptoms should wear a mask and consult a doctor promptly;
 - maintain good personal hygiene and wash hands after sneezing and coughing;
 - maintain good ventilation;
 - build up good body immunity by having a proper diet, regular exercise and adequate rest, reducing stress and avoiding smoking;
 - avoid visiting crowded places with poor ventilation, especially during influenza season;
 - Increase in respiratory illnesses or absenteeism in schools should be reported to our Central Notification Office (Tel: 2477-2772; Fax: 2477-2770) for epidemiological investigation and outbreak control.

Table 1 Newly reported institutional influenza-like illness outbreaks (as of 14 March 2pm)

Outbreak Status (Number of outbreaks)	Name of institutions
Confirmed (1)	Chuk Lam Ming Tong Care and Attention Home
Suspected (10)	Diocesan Girl's School FDBWA Szeto Ho Secondary School Man Kiu College Methodist Church HK Wesley College Methodist College Sha Tin Methodist College SKH St. Thomas' Child Care Centre Tuen Mun Catholic Secondary School TWGHs Sun Hoi Directors College Yu Chun Keung Memorial College

Figure 1 Influenza outbreaks in institutions (including residential care homes for the elderly, schools, child care centre and etc) since 2006

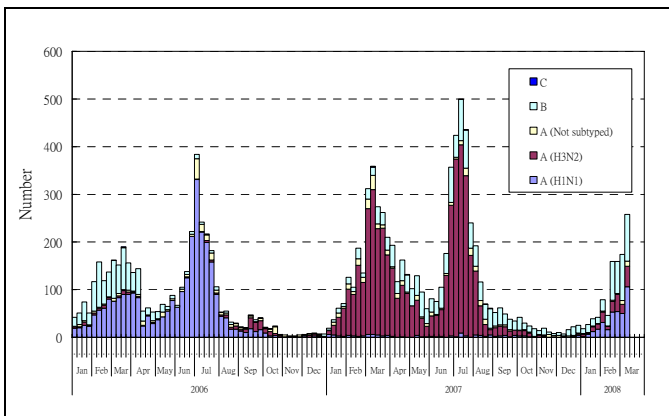


There are 10 suspected outbreaks and 1 confirmed influenza outbreaks today. So far, 15 outbreaks were confirmed last week.

In 2006 and 07, the highest numbers of confirmed outbreaks reported per week were 8 and 22 and were recorded in weeks 10 and 27.

Note: The data is subject to amendment as there is a time difference between laboratory confirmation of an outbreak and reporting of an outbreak.

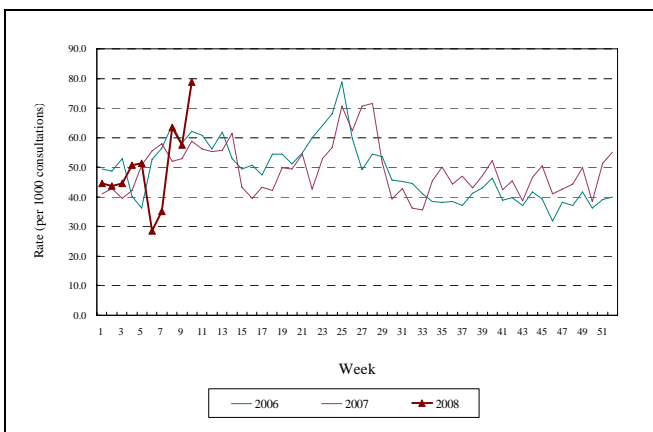
Figure 2 Influenza virus detections since 2006



There were 258 influenza detections last week. The number continues to increase.

In 2006 and 07, the highest numbers of influenza detection were 384 and 500 and were recorded in weeks 26 and 28.

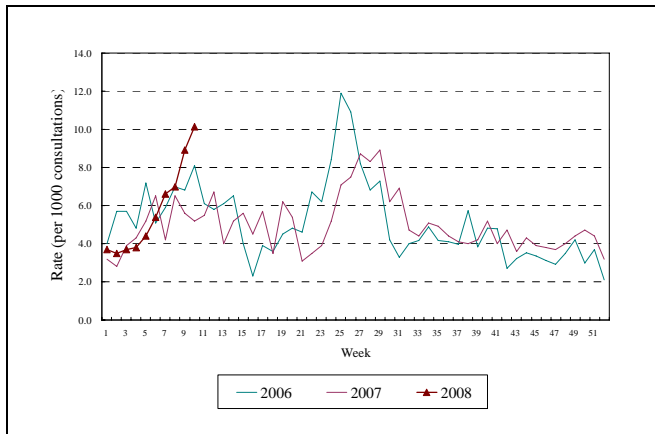
Figure 3 Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Among Sentinel Private doctors since 2006



There were 75.9 ILI per 1,000 consultations among sentinel private doctors last week. The number continues to increase.

In 2006 and 07, the highest numbers of ILI consultations among sentinel private doctors were 78.9 and 71.6 per 1,000 consultations and were recorded in weeks 25 and 28.

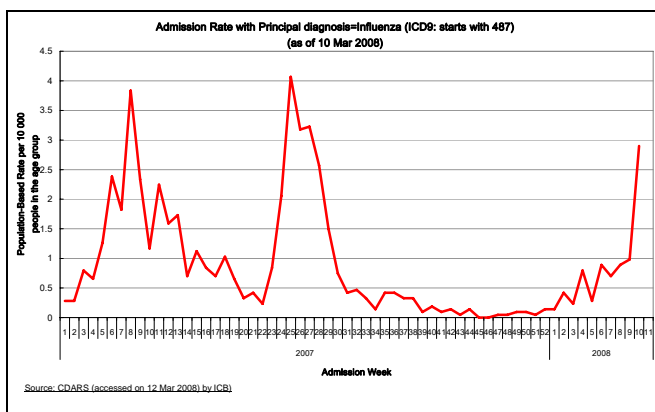
Figure 4 Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Among General Outpatient Clinics since 2006



There were 10.1 ILI per 1,000 consultations in general outpatient clinics last week. The number continues to increase.

In 2006 and 07, the highest numbers of ILI consultations in general outpatient clinics were 11.9 and 8.9 per 1,000 consultations and were recorded in weeks 25 and 29.

Figure 5 Hospital admission rates for influenza in children aged 0-4 (Data provided by the Hospital Authority)

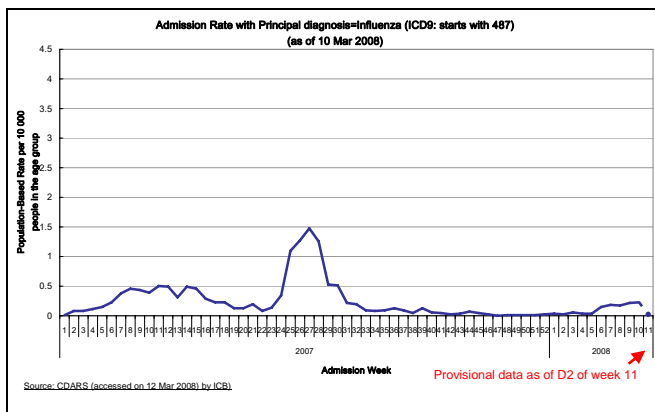


The admission rate for influenza in children age 0-4 is 2.90 per 10,000 population so far last week.

In 2006 and 07, the highest admission rate for this group were 3.00 and 4.07 per 10,000 population and were recorded in weeks 25 and 25.

Note: The data is collected on a weekly basis and is subject to amendment as the discharge diagnoses are updated from time to time

Figure 6 Hospital admission rates for influenza in elderly older than 65 years of age (Data provided by the Hospital Authority)

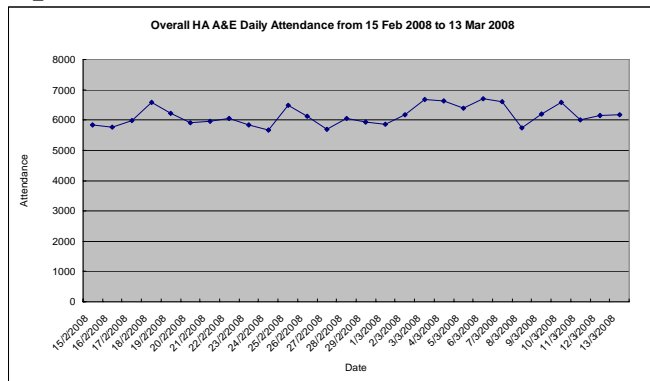


The admission rate for influenza in the elderly over 65 years old is 0.23 per 10,000 population so far last week.

In 2006 and 07, the highest admission rate for this group were 0.32 and 1.48 per 10,000 population and were recorded in weeks 26 and 27.

Note: The data is collected on a weekly basis and is subject to amendment as the discharge diagnoses are updated from time to time

Figure 7 Attendances at Hospital Authority Accident and Emergency Departments



There were 6,171 AED attendances yesterday.

In 2006 and 2007, the highest number of daily AED attendance were 6,421 and 6,412 and were recorded in weeks 26 and 50.