

Daily Update of Influenza Situation

March 18, 2008

(Day 3 of Week 12)

Highlights

1. Since our last Update, there is no new influenza outbreak. Last week, 24 confirmed influenza outbreaks were recorded. (Figure 1)
2. 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.
3. A new influenza surveillance arrangement with public and private 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 complications[†]. Since our last update, 2 children were reported through this arrangement. Both show negative test results for influenza so far. Cumulatively, 19 reports have been received since March 13. The number of cases that had laboratory evidence of influenza infection is still five (which were reported yesterday). Of them, two patients have been discharged while three others are in stable condition in hospital. For the remaining ones, preliminary tests on 12 patients have shown negative results for influenza. Two are pending influenza test results.

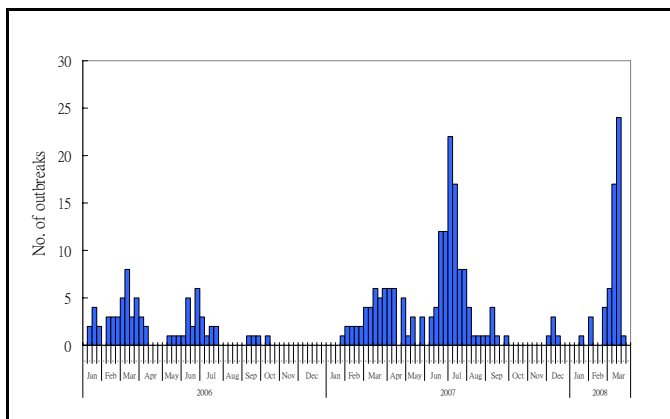
This update is prepared to provide key highlights of the daily flu situation by the Centre for Health Protection with inputs from the Hospital Authority. For more information about influenza, please visit [CHP Flu Page](#).

[†] These complications refer to severe pneumonia, severe sepsis, shock, encephalopathy, or myocarditis

4. Increase in influenza activity in the community has been reflected in laboratory and sentinel surveillance. In the week ending March 8, the number of influenza detections was 258. Increase in consultations for ILI in sentinel private clinics and general outpatient clinics have also been detected (Figures 2-4).
5. Hospital admission rates due to influenza among children aged 0 to 4 years have shown a significant increase in the week ending March 8. 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 has increased. (Figures 5-7).
6. Hong Kong is currently at the height of influenza season, which is expected to last for some period.
7. 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.
8. 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.

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

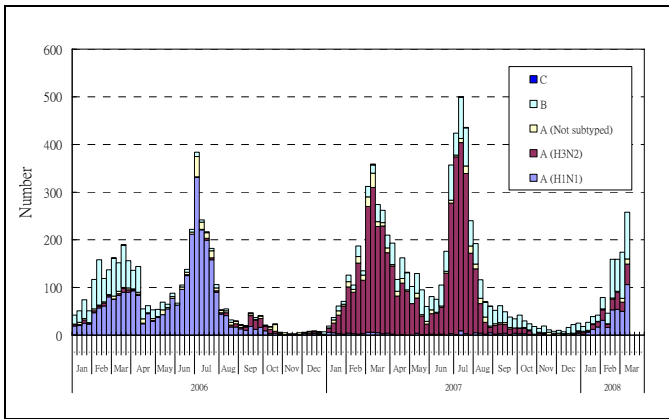


There is no new influenza outbreak today. So far, 24 outbreaks were confirmed last week.

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.

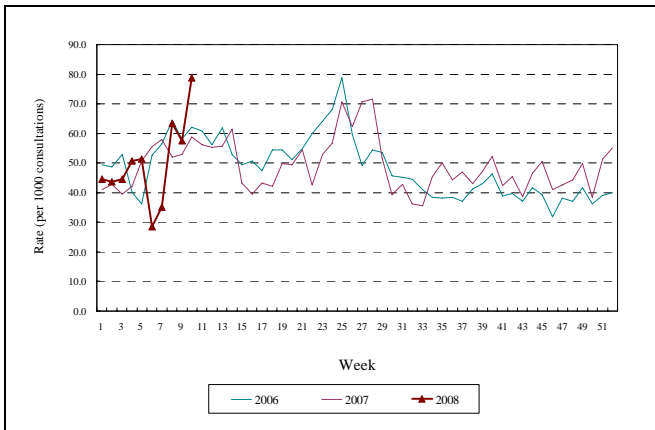
Figure 2 Influenza virus detections since 2006



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.

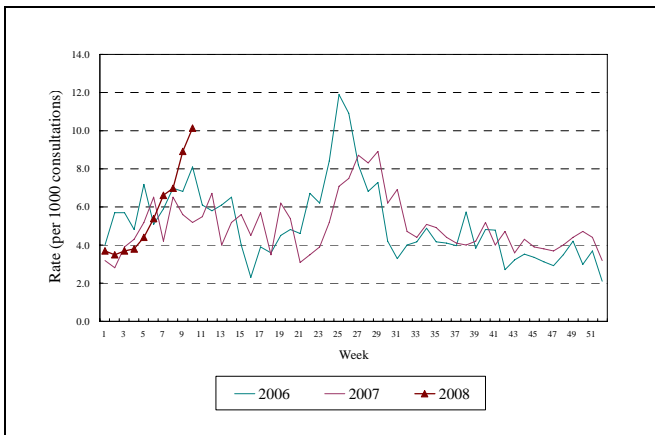
Figure 3 Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Among Sentinel Private doctors since 2006



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.

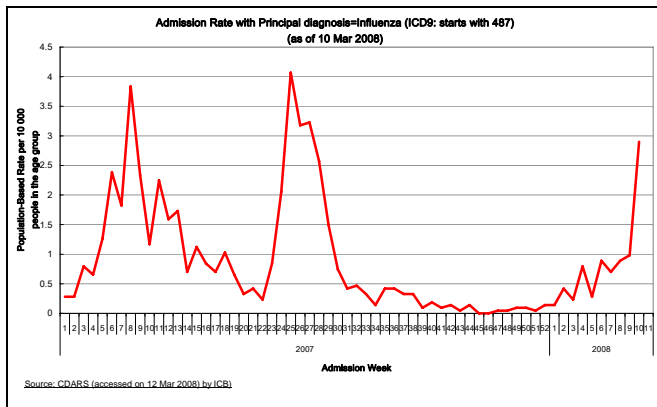
Figure 4 Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Among General Outpatient Clinics since 2006



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)

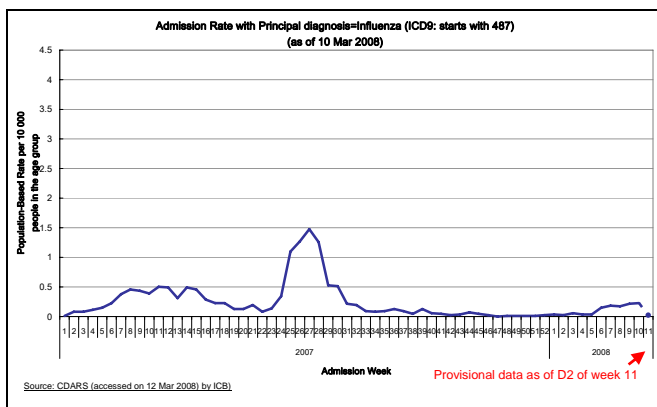


The admission rate for influenza in children age 0-4 is 2.90 per 10,000 population so far last week.

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 over 65 years of age (Data provided by the Hospital Authority)

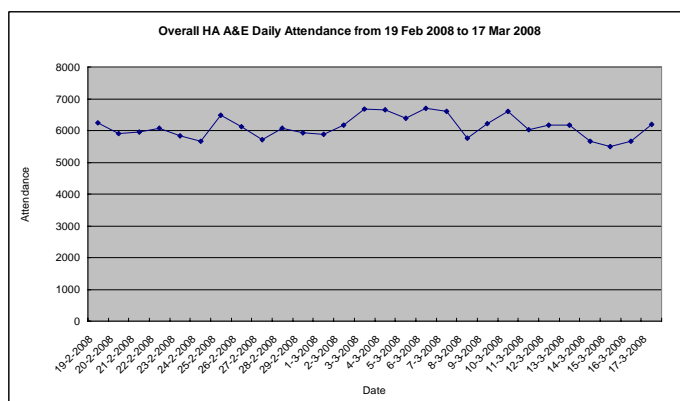


The admission rate for influenza in the elderly over 65 years old is 0.23 per 10,000 population so far last week.

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 6,203 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