

FLU EXPRESS



Flu Express is a weekly report produced by the Respiratory Disease Office of the Centre for Health Protection. It monitors and summarizes the latest local and global influenza activities.

Local Situation of Influenza Activity (as of Nov 15, 2017)

Reporting period: Nov 5 – 11, 2017 (Week 45)

- The latest surveillance data showed that the local influenza activity remained at a low level.
- Influenza can cause serious illnesses in high-risk individuals and even healthy persons. Given that seasonal influenza vaccines are safe and effective, all persons aged 6 months or above except those with known contraindications are recommended to receive influenza vaccine for personal protection.
- In the 2017/18 season, the Vaccination Subsidy Scheme (VSS) continues to provide subsidised vaccination to children aged 6 months to under 12 years, elderly aged 65 years or above, pregnant women, persons with intellectual disabilities and recipients of Disability Allowance. VSS and the Government Vaccination Programme (GVP) have been launched on Oct 18 and Oct 25, 2017 respectively. Eligible groups for free vaccination are the same as those of 2016/17 under the GVP. For more details, please refer to the webpage (http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/view_content/17980.html).

Influenza-like-illness surveillance among sentinel general outpatient clinics and sentinel private doctors, 2013-17

In week 45, the average consultation rate for influenza-like illness (ILI) among sentinel general outpatient clinics (GOPCs) was 4.7 ILI cases per 1,000 consultations, which was higher than 2.9 recorded in the previous week (Figure 1, left). The average consultation rate for ILI among sentinel private doctors was 43.8 ILI cases per 1,000 consultations, which was higher than 37.8 recorded in the previous week (Figure 1, right).

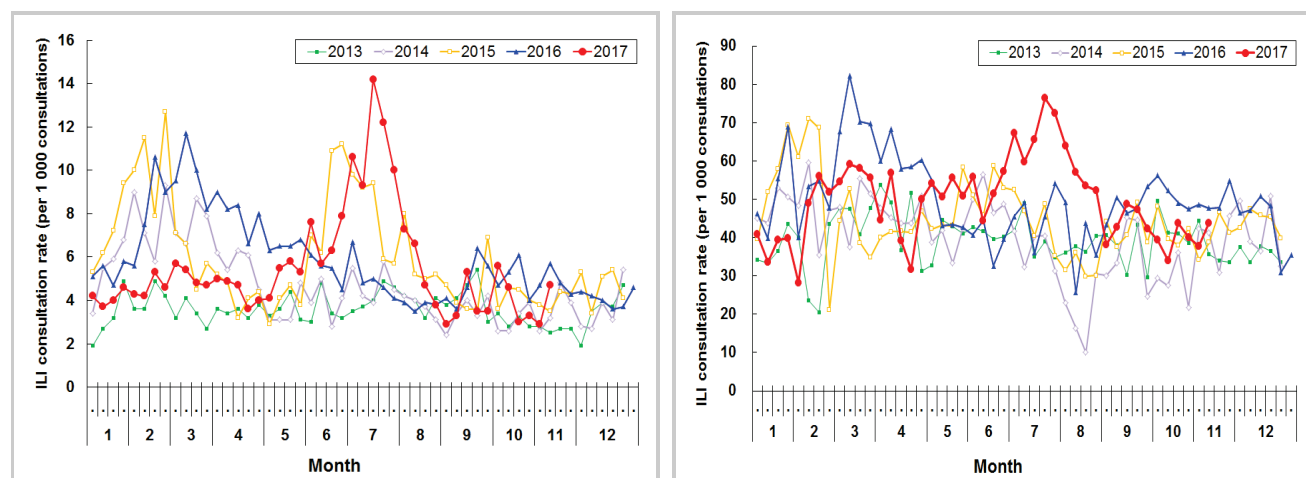


Figure 1 ILI consultation rate at sentinel GOPCs (left) and private doctors (right), 2013-17

Laboratory surveillance, 2013-17

Among the respiratory specimens received in week 45, 88 (2.26%) were tested positive for seasonal influenza viruses, including two (0.05%) influenza A(H1), 21 (0.54%) influenza A(H3), 54 (1.39%) influenza B and 11 (0.28%) influenza C. The percentage of respiratory specimens tested positive for seasonal influenza viruses last week was 2.26%, which was similar to 2.45% recorded in the previous week (Figure 2). Among the influenza viruses detected in the last week, the proportions of B, A(H3), C and A(H1) were 61.4%, 23.9%, 12.5% and 2.3% respectively.

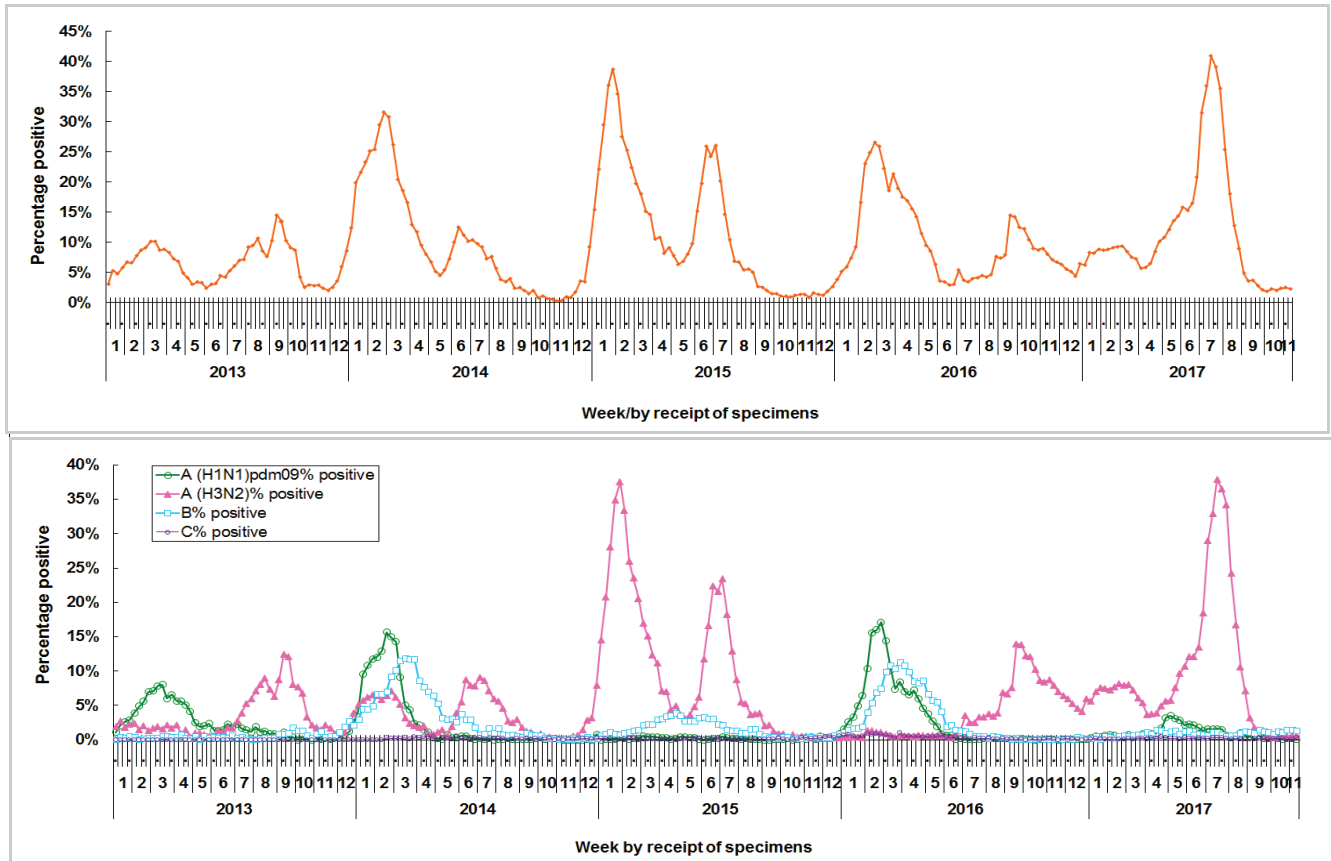


Figure 2 Percentage of respiratory specimens tested positive for influenza viruses, 2013-17 (upper: overall positive percentage, lower: positive percentage by subtypes)

Influenza-like illness outbreak surveillance, 2013-17

In week 45, six ILI outbreaks occurring in schools/institutions were recorded (affecting 26 persons), as compared to three outbreaks recorded in the previous week (affecting 15 persons) (Figure 3). In the first 4 days of week 46 (Nov 12 to 15 2017), one ILI outbreak in a school was recorded (affecting 5 persons).

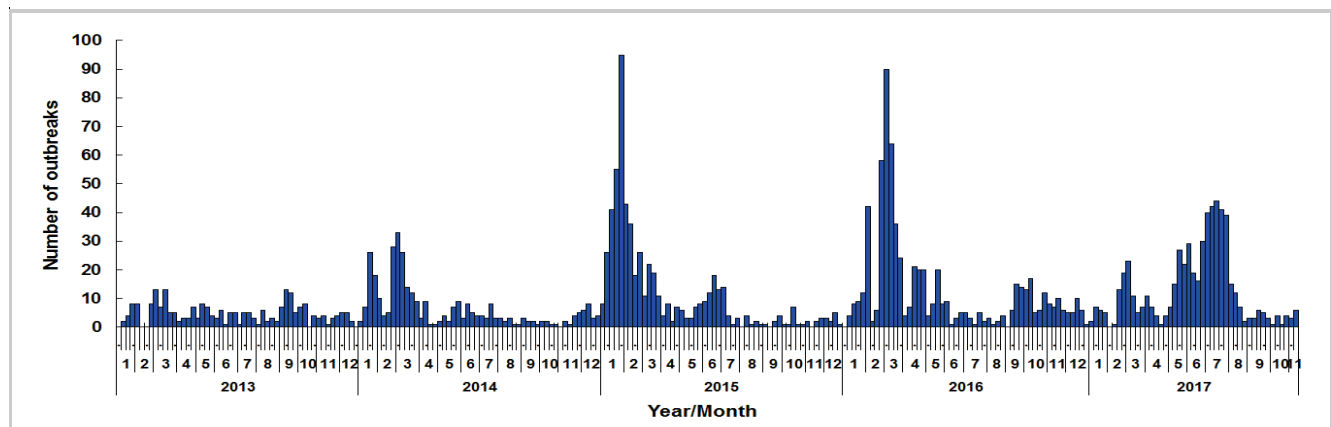


Figure 3 ILI outbreaks in schools/institutions, 2013-17

Rate of influenza-like illness syndrome group in accident and emergency departments, 2013-17[#]

In week 45, the rate of the influenza-like illness syndrome group in the accident and emergency departments (AED) was 151.7 (per 1,000 coded cases), which was lower than 156.7 in the previous week (Figure 4).

#Note: The influenza-like illness syndrome group includes codes such as influenza, upper respiratory tract infection, fever, cough, throat pain, and pneumonia.

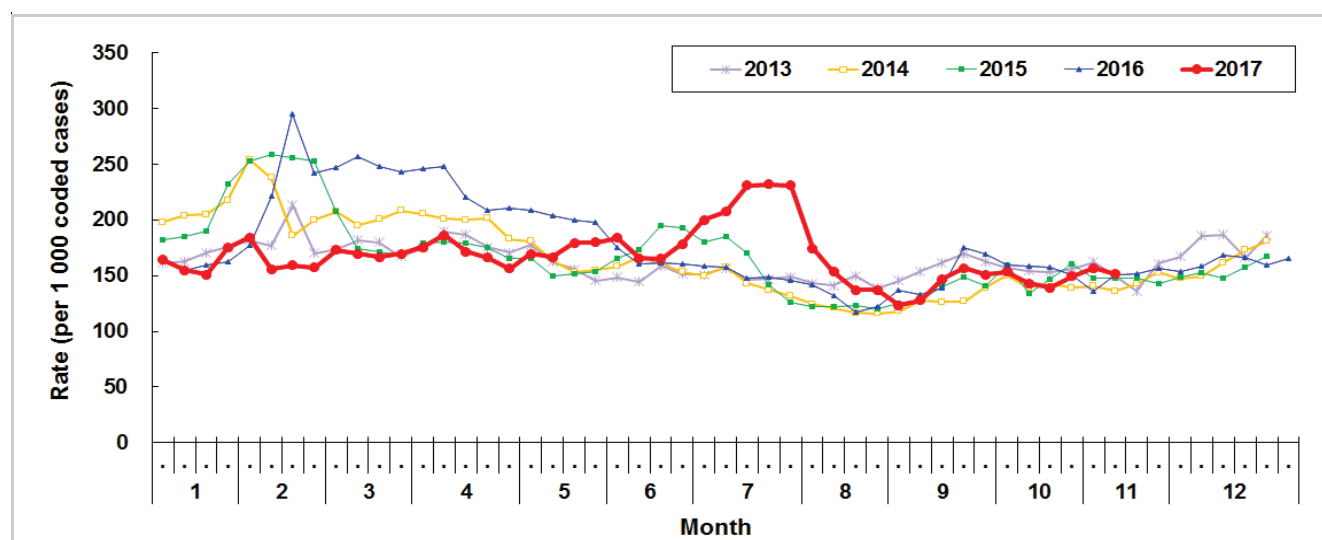


Figure 4 Rate of ILI syndrome group in AED, 2013-17

Influenza associated hospital admission rates and deaths in public hospitals based on discharge coding, 2013-17

In week 45, the admission rates in public hospitals with principal diagnosis of influenza for persons aged 0-4 years, 5-9 years, 10-64 years and 65 years or above were 0.22, 0.13, 0.02 and 0.03 cases (per 10,000 people in the age group) respectively, as compared to 0.25, 0.46, 0.01 and 0.08 cases in the previous week (Figure 5). Weekly number of deaths with any diagnosis of influenza is also shown in Figure 5.

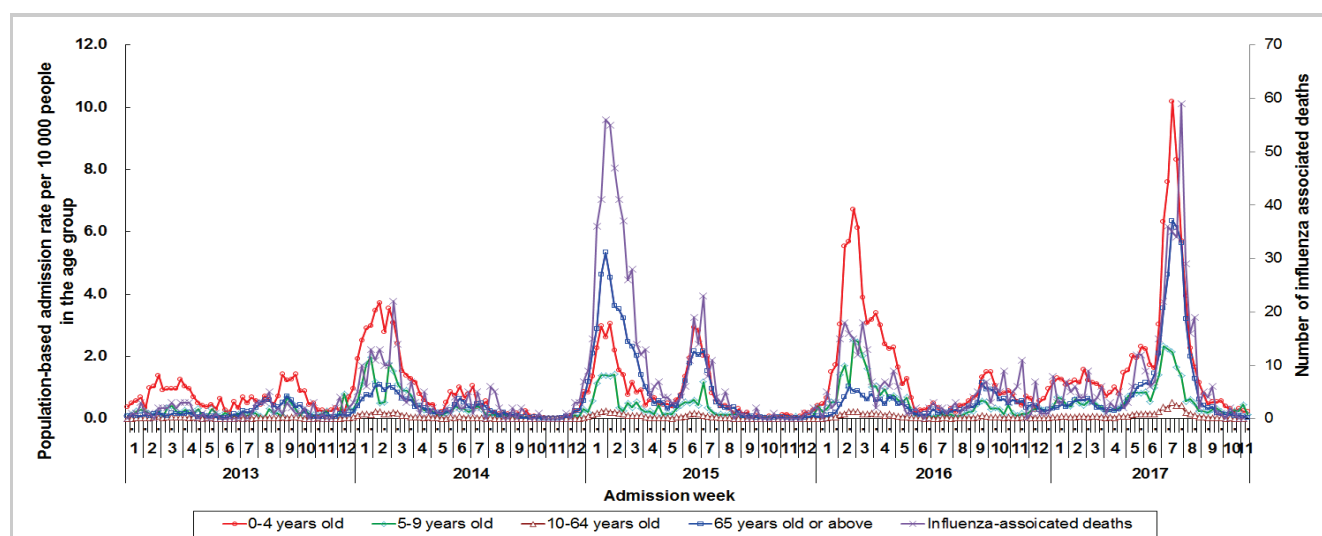


Figure 5 Influenza associated hospital admission rates and deaths, 2013-17

Fever surveillance at sentinel child care centres/ kindergartens, 2013-17

In week 45, 0.75% of children in the sentinel child care centres/ kindergartens (CCC/ KG) had fever (38°C or above) as compared to 0.78% recorded in the previous week (Figure 6).

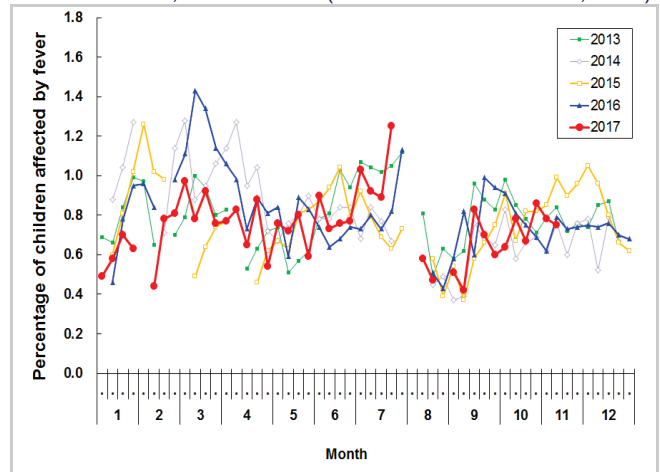


Figure 6 Percentage of children with fever at sentinel CCC/ KG, 2013-17

Fever surveillance at sentinel residential care homes for the elderly, 2013-17

In week 45, 0.08% of residents in the sentinel residential care homes for the elderly (RCHes) had fever (38°C or above) as compared to 0.09% recorded in the previous week (Figure 7).

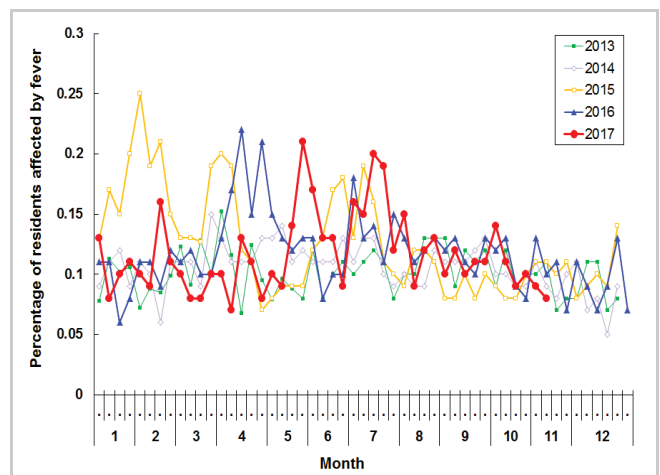


Figure 7 Percentage of residents with fever at sentinel RCHE, 2013-17

Influenza-like illness surveillance among sentinel Chinese medicine practitioners, 2013-17

In week 45, the average consultation rate for ILI among Chinese medicine practitioners (CMPs) was 2.08 ILI cases per 1,000 consultations as compared to 1.15 recorded in the previous week (Figure 8).

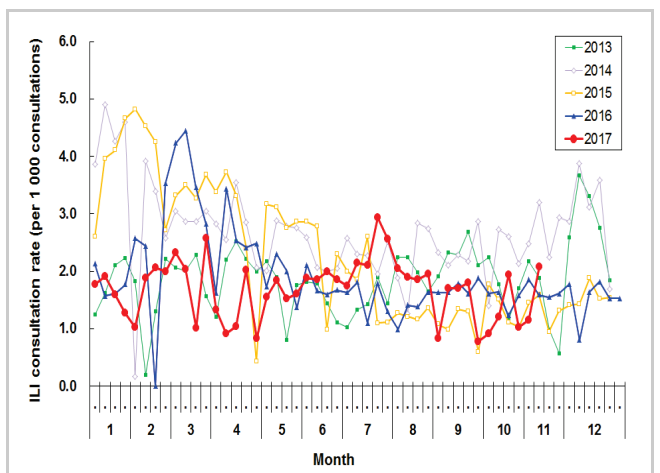


Figure 8 ILI consultation rate at sentinel CMP, 2013-17

Surveillance of severe paediatric influenza-associated complication/death (Aged below 18 years)

- In week 45 and the first 4 days of week 46 (Nov 12 to 15, 2017), there were no cases of severe paediatric influenza-associated complication/ death.

Surveillance of oseltamivir resistant influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 virus infection

- In week 45 and the first 4 days of week 46 (Nov 12 to 15, 2017), there were no new reports of oseltamivir (Tamiflu) resistant influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 virus infection. There are totally 48 reports of oseltamivir resistant influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 virus detected in Hong Kong since 2009.

Global Situation of Influenza Activity

Influenza activity remained at low levels in the temperate zone of the northern hemisphere. In the temperate zone of the southern hemisphere and in some countries of South and South East Asia, declining levels of influenza activity were reported. In Central America and the Caribbean, low influenza activity was reported in a few countries. Worldwide, influenza A(H3N2) and B viruses accounted for the majority of influenza detections.

- In the United States (week ending Nov 4, 2017), influenza activity remained low but is increasing. The proportion of outpatient visits for ILI was 1.8%, which was below the national baseline of 2.2%.
- In Canada (week ending Nov 4, 2017), influenza activity continued to increase but remained below the seasonal threshold. The percentage of tests positive for influenza remained similar to the previous week at 4.5%.
- In the United Kingdom (week ending Nov 5, 2017), influenza activity was low across surveillance systems. The positivity of influenza detection was 1.3% in the week ending Nov 5, which was below the threshold of 8.6% for this season.
- In Europe (week ending Nov 5, 2017), intensity of influenza activity remained at a low level, although sporadic detections or local spread were reported by 40% of the reporting countries. Overall, 1% of sentinel specimens were tested positive for influenza virus.
- In Australia (two-week period ending Oct 27, 2017), influenza activity declined this reporting fortnight after reaching a peak in mid-August. Surveillance systems indicate that national activity levels have returned to or are approaching baseline levels. The peak week of national influenza activity this season has been at comparable or higher levels than in recent years, with high activity persisting at the peak of the season for a number of weeks. While influenza A(H3N2) was the dominant circulating influenza virus throughout the season, influenza B is currently the dominant circulating influenza virus nationally and in many jurisdictions.
- In Macau (week ending Oct 21, 2017), the proportions of ILI cases in emergency departments among adult and children decreased as compared to the previous week. The proportion of influenza detections was 2.8%, which was similar to 2.3% in the previous week.

Sources:

Information have been extracted from the following sources when updates are available: [World Health Organization](#), [United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), [Public Health Agency of Canada](#), [Public Health England](#), [Joint European Centre for Disease Control and Prevention-World Health Organization/Flu News Europe](#), [Australian Department of Health](#) and [Health Bureau of Macau Special Administrative Region](#).