



Emerging and Reemerging Infectious Diseases, Region of the Americas

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Update on Influenza in the Americas

United States of America (USA): During Epidemiological Week (EW) 42 (from 12–18 October 2003), the overall proportion of visits to sentinel providers by patients suffering from influenza-like illness (ILI) was 1.9%, a rate less than the national baseline of 2.5%. The proportion of deaths attributed to pneumonia and influenza was 6.3%. One State Health Department (Texas) reported widespread influenza activity; 5 states and New York City reported sporadic influenza activity; and 40 states and the District of Columbia reported no influenza activity.

For this week, the US Office of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the National Respiratory and Enteric Virus Surveillance System (NREVSS) Collaborating Laboratories reported 520 specimens tested for influenza viruses, of which 15 (2.9%) were positive. Of these, 11 Influenza A (H3N2) and 4 non-subtyped Influenza A viruses were identified. Since 28 September 2003, WHO and NREVSS laboratories have tested a total of 1,980 specimens for influenza viruses, of which 70 (3.5%) were positive. Of the 70 viruses identified, 69 (99%) were Influenza A viruses and only one (1%) was an Influenza B virus. Of the 69 Influenza A viruses, 14 (20%) have been subtyped; all were Influenza A (H3N2) viruses. For October, 6 states have reported laboratory-confirmed influenza. Influenza A viruses have been identified in the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, New York, Texas, and Washington; an Influenza B virus has been identified in Hawaii.

Source: [Influenza: Reports and Surveillance Methods in the United States](#). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of the United States (CDC), National Center for Infectious Diseases.

Canada: During the week ending on 18 October 2003 (EW 42), sentinel physicians reported 15 cases of influenza-like illness per every 1,000 patient visits, a rate below baseline rates for that week. During the one-week period of 12–18 October 2003, Health Canada received 1,023 reports of laboratory tests for influenza, of which 87 (8.5%) detected Influenza A (in Saskatchewan and Alberta) but without any detecting Influenza B (see table). During EW 42, influenza outbreaks were reported in 2 schools and 1 long-term care (LTC) facility in Alberta; and in Saskatchewan, and 3 outbreaks were reported in 1 school and in 2 LTC facilities. For 2003, a total of 6,285 tests have been performed, of which 175 turned out positive (174 Influenza Virus A and one Influenza Virus B).

Source: *FluWatch*, October 12 to October 18, 2003 (Week 42), online in [English edition](#) and [Édition française](#). Health Canada.

Chile: Since EW 12 (16–22 March 2003), there has been an increase in the number of reported cases, rising to a high of 285 cases during the week of 20–26 July 2003 (at a rate of 28.6 per every 100,000 inhabitants). Since 2 August 2003, a downward trend has been observed in almost all the regions, except in Maule where reports of influenza increased at the end of September. For 2003, cases of influenza have also been reported in Antofagasta, La Serena, Viña, Valparaíso, San Fernando, Linares, Concepción, Talcahuano, Valdivia, Osorno, Puerto Montt, Aysén and Punta Arenas. A strain of Influenza A has been typified similar to strain A/Panama/2007/99 (H3N2), which is included in the vaccine for the 2003 season. Also typified were strains of Influenza A (H1) and B (with only one case for the time being). In the week from 19–25 October 2003, sporadic activity has been detected, with 2 cases of Influenza A in Talcahuano and 1 in Concepción.

Sources

- [Informe de la Situación de Influenza al 2 de octubre de 2003](#) (Report of the Influenza Situation, 2 October 2003), Ministerio de Salud de Chile (Ministry of Health of Chile) (in Spanish).
- [Country Reports for the 2003–2004 Season](#). WHO *FluNet*, World Health Organization (WHO).

Argentina: Reports received up to 24 October 2003 indicate that 848,232 cases of influenza have been reported. The provinces with greater number of cases are Buenos Aires (with 243,736 cases) and Córdoba (with 100,104 cases).

Source: [Boletín semanal de notificaciones \(24 de octubre de 2003, semana epidemiológica Nº 42\)](#) (Weekly Bulletin of Reports, 24 October 2003, EW 42). Sistema Nacional de Vigilancia Epidemiológica (SINAVE), Dirección de Epidemiología, Ministerio de Salud de Argentina (National System of Epidemiological Surveillance, Epidemiological Division, Ministry of Health of Argentina) (in Spanish).

Mexico: To 18 October 2003, 130 cases of influenza have been reported. The states with the greater number of cases are the Federal District (Distrito Federal/DF, or Mexico City, with 88 cases) and Yucatán (with 16 cases). Viral activity has been detected in other states as well (Campache, Hidalgo, Mexico, Michoacán, Nayarit, Nuevo León and Sonora). In the week of 12–18 October 2003, a single case was reported.

Source: [Boletín Epidemiológico de México, Semana 42, del 12 al 18 de octubre del 2003 \(Estadísticas en salud\)](#) (Epidemiological Bulletin of Mexico, Week 42 from 12–18 October 2003; Health Statistics). (in Spanish).

French Guiana and Uruguay: Viral activity has also been detected in French Guiana (EWs 40 and 41) and Uruguay (EW 40).

Source: [Country Reports for the 2003–2004 Season](#). WHO *FluNet*, World Health Organization (WHO).