



Emerging and Reemerging Infectious Diseases, Region of the Americas

Vol. 1, No. 21—26 November 2003

Update on Influenza in Brazil

Brazil, 2003: Of all people receiving medical attention at sentinel centers up to Epidemiological Week (EW) 44 (to 1 November 2003), 18% of them showed signs of flu syndrome (n = 902,930). During this same period, 1,143 samples of naso-pharyngeal secretions were analyzed, of which 115 were positive: 108 (93%) for Influenza A and 7 (6.1%) for Influenza B. During EWs 29 and 30, influenza was identified in 83.3% of all samples, with Influenza A predominating.

Since 2000–2002, the strains circulating in Brazil have been A/Panama/2007/99-like H3N2 (36), A/New Caledonia/20/99 H1N1 (2), B/Hong Kong/330/2001-like (12), B/Hong Kong/1351/2002-like (3), B/Sichuan /379/99-like (3), B/Shizuoka/15/2001-like (2) and B/Beijing/243/97-like (1). The influenza strains circulating in 2003 are still being identified.

Several studies are being carried out in Brazil to evaluate the impact of the vaccination strategy adopted by the country, with PAHO collaboration. Between 1999 and 2001, priority was given to vaccinating people over 65 years of age; but as of 2002, this has been extended to people over 60, with coverage registered at 74% and 87%, respectively, for these two age groups. In one of the studies, data from the information system recording hospital admissions was used as an indicator for morbidity attributed to influenza. Preliminary results show that differences do exist among the different regions of Brazil. When comparing the number of admissions due to influenza (flu, pneumonia, and bronchitis) among the population over 65 between 1998 and 2000, hospital admissions show a 15.4% drop in the southern region and a 6.8% drop in the northern region. Trend heterogeneity can be associated to seasonal differences, since the regions have drastically different climatic conditions: the southern and southeastern regions have a temperate climate with well-defined seasons, while the northern region (belonging to the Amazon) is tropical year-round.

Source: Information from the *SIVEP_GRIPE* Listserv, Coordenação de Doenças de Transmissão Respiratória, Coordenação Geral de Vigilância de Doenças Transmissíveis, Departamento de Vigilância Epidemiológica, Secretaria de Vigilância em Saúde, Ministério da Saúde do Brasil (Respiratory Disease Coordination, General Coordination for

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