Influenza activity in Portugal 2010/2011 season

Background

Influenza activity in Portugal has been monitored since 1953 at the National Institute of Health. Clinical and virological data is analysed and influenza-like illness (ILI) incidence rates are estimated weekly. Information is forwarded to National Health Authorities, contributing for the management of the disease. The National Influenza Surveillance Programme collects and integrates information generated through 2 sentinel surveillance structures, the Network of Sentinel Medical Practitioners (since 1999), and a Network of Laboratories for Influenza (A/H1N1)2009 Diagnosis that has been operating since the 2009/2010 pandemic and is mainly focused on the diagnosis of the new influenza A (H1N1)2009 strain. The results obtained through this Network of Laboratories are presented elsewhere (please see poster PO44). Here we provide a snapshot of the influenza activity in Portugal during the 2010/2011 winter, based on the information generated through the sentinel components of the Portuguese Influenza Surveillance System.

Materials and Methods

ILI cases were reported to the National Influenza Reference Laboratory and to the Epidemiology Department of the National Institute of Health, in the context of the National Influenza Surveillance Programme, from week 39/2010 through week 21/2011. The intensity and duration of the epidemic periods were described based on the weekly incidence rates for ILI. Nasopharyngeal swabs were collected for virological characterisation of influenza viruses circulating during this period.

Aknowledgements

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Results

Moderate-to-high Influenza activity (max. 121.1 ILI cases / 100 000 inhabitants on week 52/2010). Influenza activity in Portugal has been monitored since 1953 at the National Institute of Health, in the context of the National Influenza Surveillance System. The intensity and duration of the epidemic periods were described based on the weekly incidence rates for ILI. Nasopharyngeal swabs were collected for virological characterisation of influenza viruses circulating during this period.

Influenza B/Victoria dominant at beginning of the winter, gradually replaced by A(H1N1)2009. Influenza B/Yamagata and A(H3) sporadically detected.

 Fever, cough and myalgia were the signs/symptoms with a highest association with a positive laboratory diagnosis. This association is stronger for type A(H1)2009 than for type B/Vic.

ILI incidence rate and proportion of Influenza cases higher in children (5-14 years).

Influenza type A mainly detected on adults and the elderly (15-64 years).

Type B mainly detected in children (5-14 years).

Comments

As expected, the pandemic A(H1)2009 virus has adopted a seasonal behaviour during the 2010/2011 season, co-circulating with influenza B. Influenza activity and clinical presentation were similar to previous influenza winter seasons.

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