

The aim of the RAPID ASPREN update is to answer all of those questions about influenza surveillance that keep you awake at night! Our goal is to Research Anomalous ePidemiological Influenza Data when we receive queries from our loyal reporters, practice staff and other stakeholders, questioning the trends that they are seeing in the data.

If you have any topics that you think would be suitable for a RAPID ASPREN update, please email us at [aspren@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:aspren@adelaide.edu.au)

## RESEARCH QUESTION

***“The doctors in our practice are reporting higher levels of influenza over the summer. Has this been observed elsewhere in Australia to your knowledge? The media is also reporting high levels of influenza.”***

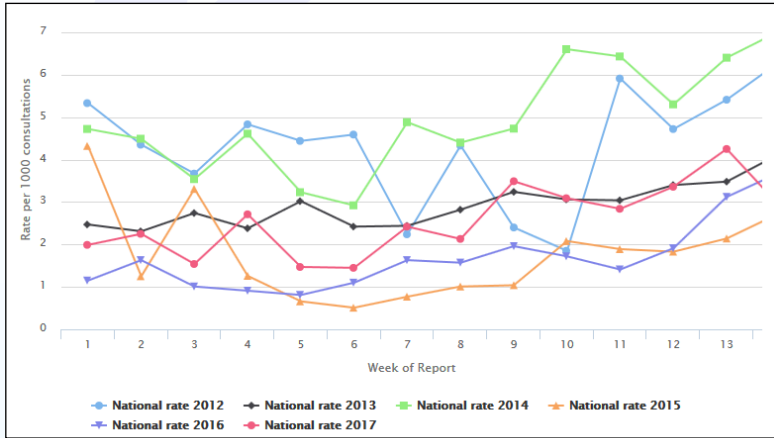


Figure 1. ASPREN ILI rate, weeks 1–13, 2012-17.

## RESULTS

Figure 1 shows ILI rates from weeks 1-13 for 2012–2017. Interseasonal ILI activity is higher than in 2015-16 but lower than that seen in 2012-14. There does not appear to be any correlation between Interseasonal ILI activity and influenza season severity with 2012, 2014 and 2015 considered as years of higher ILI activity compared to the 2013 and 2016.

Figures 2 and 3 show influenza and overall virus positivity for weeks 1-13 during 2012–2017, respectively. The primary Y-axis shows the range of weekly influenza / all virus positivity throughout the 13 week period and then secondary Y-axis and point marker show the overall influenza / all virus positivity for the 13 week period. Both influenza and all virus positivity in weeks 1–13 is the highest seen over the 6 year period.

## AIM

To determine whether Interseasonal influenza and influenza-like illness (ILI) activity is higher than previous years.

## METHODS

ASPREN virological and ILI syndromic data in weeks 1–13 from 2012 to 2017 were analysed. Weekly ILI rates were calculated at a rate per 1,000 patient consultations. Weekly influenza and all virus positivity were calculated as a proportion of the total number of swabs undertaken for the week. Overall influenza and virus positivity for the 13 week period were also calculated by dividing the total number of positive specimens by the total number of swabs performed.

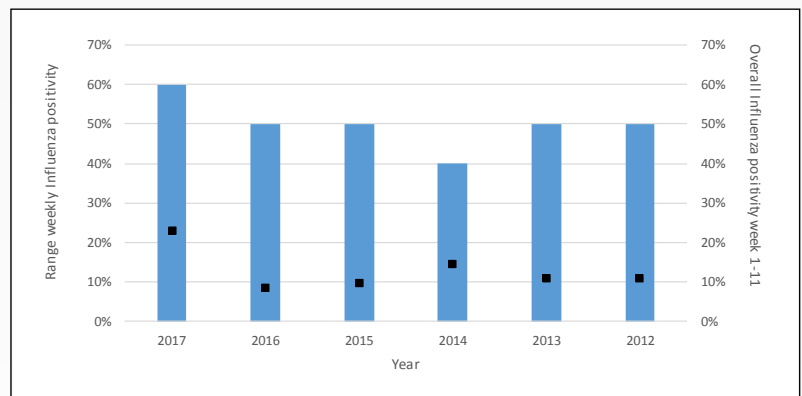


Figure 2. ASPREN influenza positivity, weeks 1-13, 2012-17.

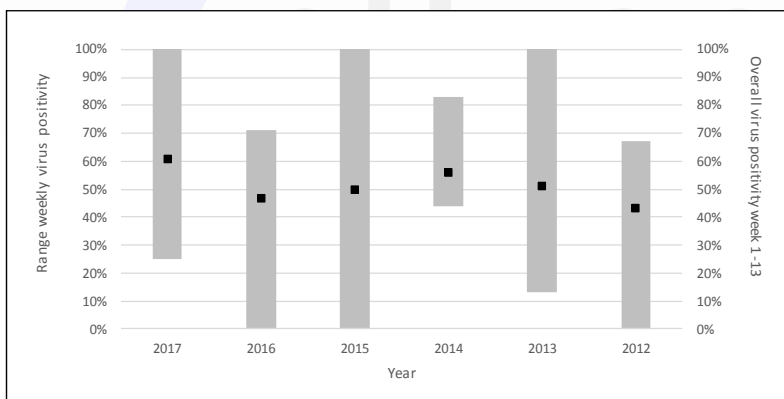


Figure 3. ASPREN all virus\* positivity, weeks 1-13, 2012-17.

\*viruses tested are as follows: influenza, parainfluenza 1,2,3, RSV, rhinovirus / enterovirus, adenovirus, mycopneumoniae, human Metapneumovirus, pertussis.

## SUMMARY

There has been a lot more influenza and other respiratory viruses circulating during the Interseasonal period, compared to previous years, however this does not give us any indication as to the severity of the upcoming flu season.