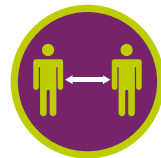


What happened to influenza virus during the COVID-19 pandemic?

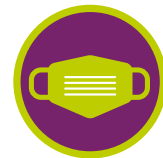
Measures to control the spread of SARS-CoV-2 were widely introduced from March 2020



Travel bans



Social distancing

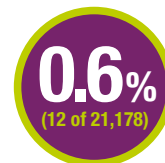


Mask wearing

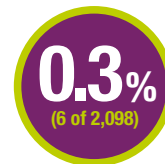
Reported cases of influenza-like illness were also greatly reduced³



in influenza activity in the US
(% submitted specimens testing positive 17 May – 8 Aug 2020)



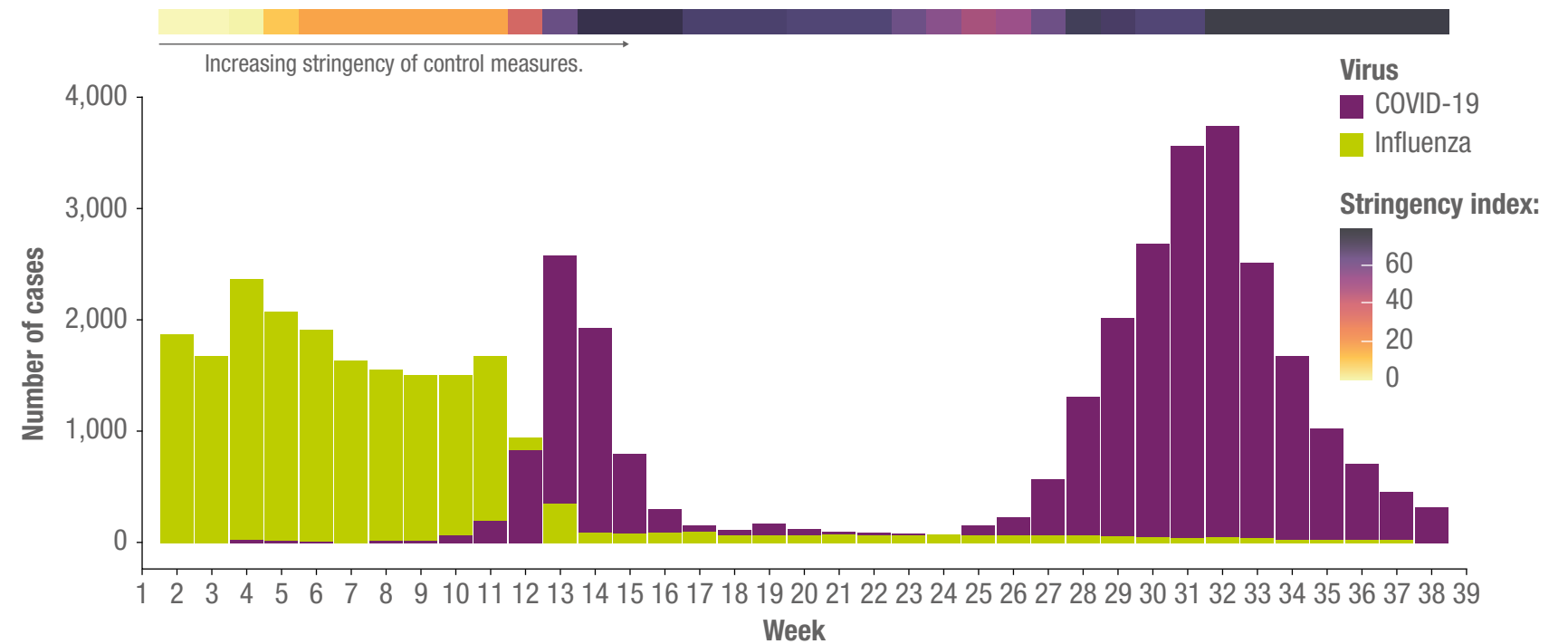
specimens tested positive in Chile
(April–July 2020)



specimens tested positive in South Africa
(April–July 2020)

COVID-19 control measures contributed to a dramatic reduction in the transmission of other viruses, such as influenza¹

Influenza and COVID-19 cases at national sentinel hospitals and stringency of COVID control, Australia, 30 Sep, 2020²



Experts warn that low levels of population immunity may lead to outbreaks of viruses such as **influenza**⁴



Low virus levels has meant few viruses for characterisation and little data on which to base influenza vaccine strain recommendations^{5,6}



WHO advises:
“...maintain continuous influenza surveillance”⁶

Dr Susan Hopkins
(Public Health England):
“...prepare for a hard winter” (2021–2022)

GII Co-chair Prof Bruno Lina:
“expect the unexpected from influenza virus”

For further information, see issue 1 of InFluNews from the Global Influenza Initiative

References. 1. Sullivan SG, et al. *Euro Surveill* 2020 25(47):2001847; 2. Figure reproduced with adaptation from Sullivan SG, et al. 2020 in line with the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) Licence; 3. Olsen SJ, et al. *MMWR* 2020 69(37):1305–09; 4. Baker RE, et al. *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA* 2020;117(48):30547–53; 5. World Health Organisation. Recommended composition of influenza virus vaccines for use in the 2021–2022 northern hemisphere influenza season. Feb 2021. Available at: https://www.who.int/influenza/vaccines/virus/recommendations/2021-22_north/en/; accessed April, 2021; 6. World Health Organisation. Questions and Answers. Recommended composition of influenza virus vaccines for use in the Northern hemisphere 2021–2022 influenza season and development of candidate vaccine viruses for pandemic preparedness. 26 Feb 2021. Available at: https://www.who.int/influenza/vaccines/virus/recommendations/202102_qanda_recommendation.pdf?ua=1; accessed April, 2021; 7. BBC News. COVID: UK must prepare for 'hard winter' of flu – expert. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-56312621>; accessed April, 2021.