



Weekly Report on Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI), Week 20 2024 (week ending 19/05/2024)

This report includes data on SARI hospitalised cases, aged 15 years and older who were admitted to St. Vincent's University Hospital (SVUH), Dublin, up to week 20 2024.

Please note that this report pertains to one hospital site only, data are not nationally representative. Therefore, caution is advised when interpreting rates and trends outlined in this report, as these may fluctuate due to the low case numbers.

Key points

Week 20 2024 (week ending 19/05/2024):

- **Number of cases:** 15 SARI cases admitted to the SARI hospital site, compared to 11 cases in week 19 2024 (36.4% increase).
- **Incidence rate per hospital catchment population:** 4.7 per 100,000 population aged 15 years and older, compared to 3.5 per 100,000 in week 19 2024.
- **Incidence rate per emergency hospitalisations:** 42.9 per 1,000, compared to 34.5 per 1,000 in week 19 2024 (24.3% increase).
- **Age profile:** Seven (46.7%) of SARI cases aged ≥ 65 years; Median age: 61 years; IQR: 36-80 years.
- **Underlying medical conditions:** 13 (86.7%) SARI cases reported having underlying medical conditions.
- **PCR testing:** Of those tested, three (20.0%) tested positive for SARS-CoV-2; no cases tested positive for influenza or RSV.

Last four weeks (weeks 17 - 20 2024)

- **Number of cases:** 57 SARI cases admitted to the SARI hospital site.
- **Age profile:** 42 (73.7%) of SARI cases aged ≥ 65 years. Median age: 61 years; IQR: 36-80 years.
- **Underlying medical conditions:** 53 (93.0%) SARI cases reported having underlying medical conditions.
- **PCR testing:** Of those tested, 13 (23.2%) tested positive for SARS-CoV-2; one (1.8%) tested positive for influenza (one AH3); and none tested positive for RSV.
- **SARS-CoV-2 whole genome sequencing (WGS):** *There can be a lag-time before WGS results are available.* Among those sequenced (n=9), all (100.0%) identified as variant BA.2 sub-lineage JN.1 (and its sub-lineages).

Season 2023/2024 to date (weeks 40 2023 - 20 2024)

Collection of discharge data is a manual process, there is a significant lag time between discharge and data collection. Vaccination data is available approximately one week after cases are notified.

- **Number of cases:** 480 SARI cases admitted to the SARI hospital site.
- **PCR testing:** Of those tested (n=467), 59 (12.6%) tested positive for SARS-CoV-2; 55 (11.8%) tested positive for influenza (6 A(not subtyped); 32 AH3; 17 A(H1)pdm09); and 19 (4.1%) tested positive for RSV.
- **Vaccination status:** Of those who tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 with known vaccination status (n=44), 24 (54.5%) had not received a COVID-19 vaccine dose within 180 days prior to their episode of illness.
- Of those who tested positive for influenza with known vaccination status (n=52), 23 (44.2%) had not received this season's influenza vaccine prior to their episode of illness.
- **ICU admissions:** Among those for whom admission to ICU and/or respiratory status is known (n=452), 252 (55.8%) reported admission to ICU and/or required respiratory support.
- **Outcome:** Of those discharged, with known outcome (n=380), 40 (10.5%) SARI cases died in hospital.

Table of contents

Table of contents.....	2
Background.....	3
Methods.....	3
Case definition.....	3
Denominator data.....	4
Laboratory testing.....	4
Data collection and reporting.....	4
The influenza season.....	4
Reference dates.....	5
Results.....	6
SARI cases and incidence rates.....	6
Demographics.....	7
Underlying medical conditions and risk factors.....	8
Symptoms.....	10
Severe clinical course during hospitalisation.....	11
Laboratory testing for SARS-CoV-2, Influenza and RSV.....	12
Outcome.....	16
Vaccination status.....	16
Acknowledgements.....	19
Technical notes.....	19
Appendix.....	20
Table A1.....	20
Table A2.....	20
Table A3.....	21

Background

Severe acute respiratory infection (SARI) is of major relevance to public health worldwide. Surveillance of SARI is essential to monitor the (co-) circulation of respiratory pathogens and to assess disease severity. Data collected as part of SARI surveillance can provide important early warning information in the context of respiratory disease outbreaks and pandemics. SARI data can also be used as a platform to measure vaccine and antiviral effectiveness and impact. The objectives of SARI surveillance are:

- To describe the number and incidence of SARI cases by aetiology, time, place and person
- To describe and monitor trends, intensity of activity and severity of SARI infections
- To identify groups at risk of severe disease
- To detect unusual and unexpected events
- To assess the SARI burden of disease in the participating hospital
- To assess and monitor vaccine effectiveness

Methods

SARI surveillance was implemented in one tertiary care adult hospital: St. Vincent's University Hospital (SVUH), Dublin. Surveillance commenced on the 5th of July 2021. The SARI surveillance system includes people who are aged 15 years or older.

Case definition

SARI cases are identified from new admissions through the Emergency Department, based on clinical symptoms. Patients that develop SARI during their admission, or are admitted through alternate routes, are not included.

Clinical SARI case:

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) clinical SARI case definition is used for SARI surveillance in Ireland since week 34 2021:

- ECDC SARI definition: A hospitalised¹ person with acute respiratory infection, with at least one of the following symptoms: cough, fever, shortness of breath OR sudden onset of anosmia, ageusia or dysgeusia with onset of symptoms within 14 days prior to hospital admission.

¹ Hospitalised for at least 24 hours

Denominator data

Denominator data for the hospital catchment area are based on the Census of Population, 2022. The hospital catchment data were prepared and provided by the Health Intelligence Unit (HIU) of the Health Service Executive (HSE) and were extracted from Health Atlas Ireland on 15/12/2023.

Weekly denominator data on all-cause hospital admissions, through the Emergency Department, are provided by the SVUH Statistics Department.

Laboratory testing

SARS-CoV-2, influenza, and RSV PCR testing is carried out on admission.

SARI samples that are positive for SARS-CoV-2 and that have a cycle threshold (Ct) value <25 are referred for whole genome sequencing (WGS). All WGS testing was performed in the NVRL up to week 44 2022. The molecular laboratory in SVUH has been identified as a spoke WGS testing site as part of the national SARS-CoV-2 WGS surveillance programme. From week 45 2022, SARI WGS testing has been performed on-site at SVUH.

Samples that are PCR positive for influenza are sent to the National Virus Reference Laboratory (NVRL) for influenza typing/subtyping/genetic and antigenic characterisation.

Data collection and reporting

Clinical data are collected and managed using REDCap electronic data capture tools hosted at University College Dublin. Laboratory data are extracted from APEX, the laboratory information management system (LIMS), using IBM Cognos software hosted at SVUH.

Case-based data are reported by SVUH to the HSE Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) on a weekly basis. Data are also reported by HPSC to ECDC via The European Surveillance System (TESSy) on weekly basis as part of European level SARI surveillance.

COVID-19 vaccination data are obtained from the National COVID-19 Vaccination Management System (COVAX) and linked to SARI cases by the HSE-Integrated Information Service (IIS), where data are available.

The influenza season

The influenza surveillance season runs from week 40 (early October) to week 20 (end of May). During this time, seasonal viruses usually circulate at higher levels, compared to the summer period (weeks 21 to 39). The seasonal comparisons used in this report refer to the influenza surveillance season.

Reference dates

05/07/2021 (Week 27 2021) – commencement of SARI surveillance project
27/09/2021 (Week 39 2021) – rollout of the first COVID-19 booster vaccination campaign
22/04/2022 (Week 16 2022) – rollout of the second COVID-19 booster vaccination campaign
03/10/2022 (Week 40 2022) – rollout of the third COVID-19 booster vaccination campaign
28/04/2023 (Week 17 2023) – rollout of the fourth COVID-19 booster vaccination campaign
02/10/2023 (Week 40 2023) – rollout of the fifth COVID-19 booster vaccination campaign
04/10/2021 (Week 40 2021) - start of the 2021/2022 season
03/10/2022 (Week 40 2022) - start of the 2022/2023 season
02/10/2023 (Week 40 2023) - start of the 2023/2024 season

Week number refers to the week of hospital admission. Weeks are from Monday to Sunday, as per the international ISO week².

² Monday to Sunday (ISO week) used as per ECDC/WHO/International reporting protocol.

Results

Data were extracted from the HPSC SARI surveillance database on **22/05/2024**. Data are provisional and subject to ongoing review, validation and update. As a result, figures presented in this report may differ from previously published figures.

SARI cases and incidence rates

In total, 480 SARI cases were admitted to St. Vincent’s University Hospital (SVUH) during the current season (weeks 40 2023 - 20 2024), 555 SARI cases were admitted during the same period in the 2022/2023 season (weeks 40 2022 - 20 2023).

In week 20 2024:

- 15 SARI cases were reported, a 36.4% increase compared to 11 SARI cases reported in week 19 2024 (Figure 1)
- The SARI incidence rate was 4.7 per 100,000 hospital catchment population aged 15 years and older, compared to the rate of 3.5 per 100,000 in week 19 2024.
- The incidence rate per emergency hospitalisations was 42.9 per 1,000 emergency admissions, a 24.3% increase compared to the rate of 34.5 per 1,000 emergency admissions in week 19 2024.

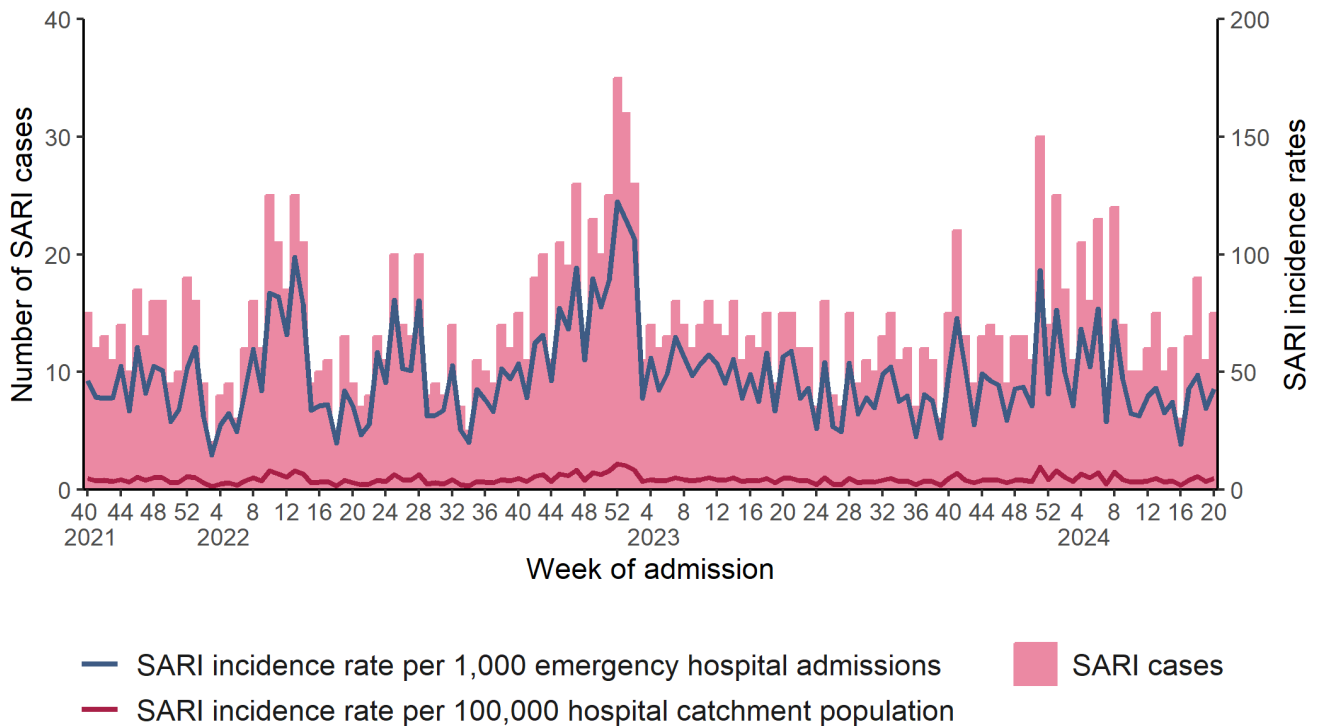


Figure 1: Number and incidence of SARI hospitalised cases (emergency admissions) by week of hospital admission, week 40 2021 to week 20 2024 (n=1889)

Demographics

In week 20 2024, of the 15 SARI cases reported:

- Females accounted for a higher proportion of SARI cases, n=12 (80.0%) (Table 1)
- Median age of SARI cases admitted was 61 years (interquartile range: 36-80 years)
- Age specific incidence rate amongst those aged 65 years and older was 11.2 per 100,000 compared to 17.5 per 100,000 in week 19 2024.

The incidence rate per 100,000 hospital catchment population by age group is shown in Figure 2.

Table 1: Number and proportion of SARI cases by sex and age, for the current week, last four weeks (weeks 17 - 20 2024), current 2023/2024 season (weeks 40 2023 - 20 2024) and the previous 2022/2023 season (weeks 40 2022 - 20 2023)

Season	Current week W20 2024	Last four weeks W17 2024 - W20 2024	Current season W40 2023 - W20 2024	Previous season W40 2022 - W20 2023
All SARI cases	N = 15¹	N = 57¹	N = 480¹	N = 555¹
Gender				
Female	12 (80.0%)	35 (61.4%)	244 (50.8%)	290 (52.3%)
Male	3 (20.0%)	22 (38.6%)	236 (49.2%)	265 (47.7%)
Age (years)				
Mean	58	70	72	72
Median	61	76	77	75
IQR	36 - 81	61 - 85	66 - 84	64 - 83
Range	16 - 94	16 - 96	16 - 100	17 - 99
Age groups (years)				
15-24	2 (13.3%)	5 (8.8%)	14 (2.9%)	9 (1.6%)
25-34	1 (6.7%)	1 (1.8%)	13 (2.7%)	13 (2.3%)
35-44	3 (20.0%)	3 (5.3%)	26 (5.4%)	20 (3.6%)
45-54	1 (6.7%)	2 (3.5%)	21 (4.4%)	32 (5.8%)
55-64	1 (6.7%)	4 (7.0%)	33 (6.9%)	78 (14.1%)
65-74	1 (6.7%)	9 (15.8%)	103 (21.5%)	119 (21.4%)
75-84	3 (20.0%)	18 (31.6%)	163 (34.0%)	172 (31.0%)
85+	3 (20.0%)	15 (26.3%)	107 (22.3%)	112 (20.2%)

¹n (%)

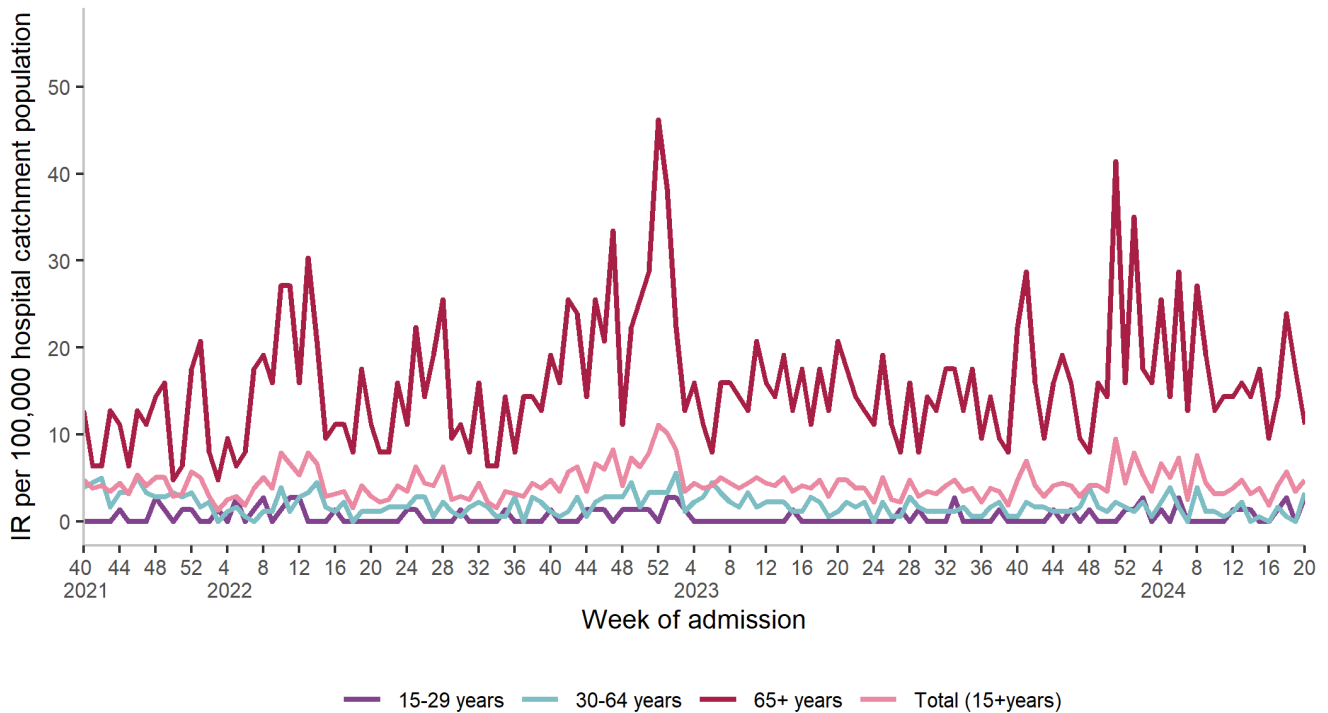


Figure 2: SARI incidence rate per 100,000 hospital catchment population by age group and week of hospital admission, from week 40 2021 to week 20 2024 (n=1889)

Underlying medical conditions and risk factors

The number and proportion of individuals with underlying medical conditions, where known, among those that reported having underlying medical conditions are displayed in Table 2.

Weekly proportions can be based on small numbers and vary from week to week, caution is therefore advised when interpreting changes in weekly proportions.

SARI cases could be reported with one or more underlying medical conditions, only cases where underlying medical conditions are reported are included in Table 2.

Table 2: Number and proportion of SARI cases with underlying medical conditions (among those that reported having underlying medical conditions), reported on hospital admission, for the current week, last four weeks (weeks 17 - 20 2024), current 2023/2024 season (weeks 40 2023 - 20 2024) and the previous 2022/2023 season (weeks 40 2022 - 20 2023)

Period	Current week	Last four weeks	Current season	Previous season
Weeks	W20 2024	W17 2024 - W20 2024	W40 2023 - W20 2024	W40 2022 - W20 2023
Total cases	N = 13¹	N = 53¹	N = 444¹	N = 524¹
Heart disease	2 (15.4%)	14 (26.4%)	184 (41.4%)	206 (39.3%)
Hypertension	3 (23.1%)	21 (39.6%)	157 (35.4%)	218 (41.6%)
Lung disease	3 (23.1%)	20 (37.7%)	152 (34.2%)	197 (37.6%)
Cancer	1 (7.7%)	6 (11.3%)	77 (17.3%)	78 (14.9%)
Neurological disease	1 (7.7%)	8 (15.1%)	73 (16.4%)	127 (24.2%)
Asthma	4 (30.8%)	11 (20.8%)	56 (12.6%)	87 (16.6%)
Diabetes	0 (0.0%)	3 (5.7%)	72 (16.2%)	90 (17.2%)
Kidney disease	1 (7.7%)	4 (7.5%)	52 (11.7%)	35 (6.7%)
Intellectual disability	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.9%)	7 (1.6%)	19 (3.6%)
Immunocompromised	2 (15.4%)	2 (3.8%)	8 (1.8%)	4 (0.8%)
Obesity	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (0.9%)	13 (2.5%)
Cystic fibrosis	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (1.4%)	1 (0.2%)
Dementia ²	2 (15.4%)	7 (13.2%)	49 (11.0%)	-
Rheumatological disease ²	2 (15.4%)	9 (17.0%)	31 (7.0%)	-
Liver disease ²	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (0.9%)	-
Asplenia ²	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.9%)	1 (0.2%)	-
Down syndrome ²	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.2%)	-
Long COVID ²	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	-
Tuberculosis ²	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.2%)	-
Other chronic conditions ³	6 (46.2%)	23 (43.4%)	164 (36.9%)	263 (50.2%)

¹n (%)

² Data collection for these underlying medical conditions began in week 49 2023.

³ Data reported on other chronic conditions may include some of the chronic conditions listed above, these data are under review and may change over time.

Among female SARI cases aged 15-49 years admitted during the 2023/2024 season (weeks 40 2023 - 20 2024), one (2.8%) case was reported as being pregnant at the time of admission. During the same period in the 2022/2023 season (weeks 40 2022 - 20 2023), three (10.3%) SARI cases were reported as being pregnant at the time of admission.

Among those admitted during the 2023/2024 season for whom healthcare worker status is known, six (1.3%) cases were reported as being healthcare workers at the time of admission. During the same period in the 2022/2023 season, six (1.1%) SARI cases were reported as being healthcare workers.

Symptoms

Information on clinical symptoms, either at or prior to hospital admission, was reported for all SARI cases. The most common symptoms reported were cough and shortness of breath (Table 3).

Table 3: Number and proportion of SARI cases with clinical symptoms, either at or prior to hospital admission, for the current week, last four weeks (weeks 17 - 20 2024), current 2023/2024 season (weeks 40 2023 - 20 2024) and the previous 2022/2023 season (weeks 40 2022 - 20 2023)

Period	Current week	Last four weeks	Current season	Previous season
Weeks	W20 2024	W17 2024 - W20 2024	W40 2023 - W20 2024	W40 2022 - W20 2023
Total cases	N = 15¹	N = 57¹	N = 480¹	N = 555¹
Cough	12 (80.0%)	47 (82.5%)	352 (73.5%)	443 (79.8%)
Shortness of breath	9 (60.0%)	40 (70.2%)	352 (73.5%)	408 (73.5%)
Fever	6 (40.0%)	32 (56.1%)	222 (46.4%)	278 (50.1%)
General deterioration	5 (33.3%)	22 (38.6%)	159 (33.3%)	260 (46.8%)
Malaise	1 (6.7%)	2 (3.5%)	69 (14.4%)	49 (8.8%)
Headache	1 (6.7%)	2 (3.5%)	19 (4.0%)	27 (4.9%)
Muscular pain	2 (13.3%)	2 (3.5%)	19 (4.0%)	34 (6.1%)
Sore throat	3 (20.0%)	4 (7.0%)	28 (5.8%)	27 (4.9%)
Ageusia	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.2%)	1 (0.2%)
Anosmia	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.2%)	2 (0.4%)
Dysgeusia	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.2%)	0 (0.0%)
Sepsis ³	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.8%)	31 (8.2%)	-
Acute confusion ³	3 (20.0%)	8 (14.0%)	32 (8.5%)	-
Vomiting ³	0 (0.0%)	2 (3.5%)	25 (6.7%)	-
Nausea ³	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.8%)	10 (2.7%)	-
Diarrhoea ³	0 (0.0%)	3 (5.3%)	13 (3.5%)	-
Apnoea ³	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (0.5%)	-

¹ n (%)

² SARI cases could be reported with one or more clinical symptoms

³ Data collection for these symptoms began in week 49 2023.

Severe clinical course during hospitalisation

Information on the clinical course during hospitalisation is only available after discharge, and there may be a delay between discharge and data collection, due to the manual data collection methods required. SARI cases could be reported with one or more complications, among those for whom discharge information is available the most common complication reported was pneumonia (Table 4).

Data collection is ongoing for those not yet discharged from hospital.

Table 4: Number and proportion of SARI cases by complication, for the current 2023/2024 season (weeks 40 2023 - 20 2024), the previous 2022/2023 season (weeks 40 2022 - 20 2023), and cases admitted between week 40 2022 and week 20 2024

Season(s) Week/Year	Current season W40 2023 - W20 2024	Previous season W40 2022 - W20 2023	Since W40 2022 W40 2022 - W20 2024
Total discharged cases	N = 380¹	N = 555¹	N = 1,143¹
Pneumonia	53 (13.9%)	44 (7.9%)	151 (13.2%)
ARDS	14 (3.7%)	19 (3.4%)	52 (4.5%)
Sepsis	23 (6.1%)	14 (2.5%)	42 (3.7%)
Multiorgan failure	7 (1.8%)	4 (0.7%)	15 (1.3%)
Myocarditis	1 (0.3%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.1%)
Encephalitis	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Bronchiolitis	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.1%)
Acute kidney injury ²	27 (7.1%)	1 (0.2%)	29 (2.5%)
Heart failure ²	19 (5.0%)	2 (0.4%)	22 (1.9%)
Secondary bacterial infection ²	6 (1.6%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (0.5%)
Other complications ³	76 (20.0%)	146 (26.3%)	269 (23.5%)
No complications	201 (52.9%)	356 (64.1%)	650 (56.9%)

¹n (%)

² Data collection for these complications began in week 49 2023.

³ Data reported on "other complications" may include some of the complications listed above, these data are under review and may change over time.

Table 5: Number and proportion of SARI cases by respiratory support and ICU admission, for the current 2023/2024 season (weeks 40 2023 - 20 2024), the previous 2022/2023 season (weeks 40 2022 - 20 2023), and cases admitted between week 40 2022 and week 20 2024

Season(s)	Current season	Previous season	Since W40 2022
Week/Year	W40 2023 - W20 2024	W40 2022 - W20 2023	W40 2022 - W20 2024
Respiratory support status known	N = 374	N = 555	N = 1137
High-flow oxygen therapy ¹	241 (64.4%)	347 (62.5%)	714 (62.8%)
Invasive ventilation	7 (1.9%)	15 (2.7%)	25 (2.2%)
No respiratory support	115 (30.7%)	193 (34.8%)	387 (34.0%)
ICU status known	N = 452	N = 555	N = 1216
ICU/ventilated ²	252 (55.8%)	362 (65.2%)	744 (61.2%)
Admitted to ICU	12 (2.7%)	31 (5.6%)	52 (4.3%)
Admitted and discharged	10 (2.2%)	31 (5.6%)	50 (4.1%)
ICU length of stay (days)			
Mean	7	9	8
Median	6	5	5
Interquartile range	3-10	3-10	2-10
Range	1-15	1-42	<1-42

¹ Non-invasive ventilation

² SARI cases which required invasive and/or non-invasive ventilation and/or ICU admission

Laboratory testing for SARS-CoV-2, Influenza and RSV

PCR testing:

SARI cases are tested by PCR for SARS-CoV-2, influenza and RSV on admission.

In week 20 2024:

- SARS-CoV-2 PCR testing was carried out on 15 (100.0%) SARI cases, three (20.0%) tested positive, compared to two (20.0%) SARS-CoV-2 positive cases in week 19 2024.
- Influenza PCR testing was carried out on 15 (100.0%) SARI cases, none tested positive for influenza. There were one (10.0%) positive in week 19 2024.
- Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) PCR testing was carried out on 15 (100.0%) SARI cases, none tested positive for RSV. The last RSV-positive case was reported in week 6 2024.

The weekly positivity rate of SARI cases for the three acute respiratory pathogens are presented in Figure 3. Table 6 displays the number and proportion of SARI cases tested by PCR and positive for SARS-CoV-2, influenza and RSV, and the type/subtype for all influenza PCR positive test results.

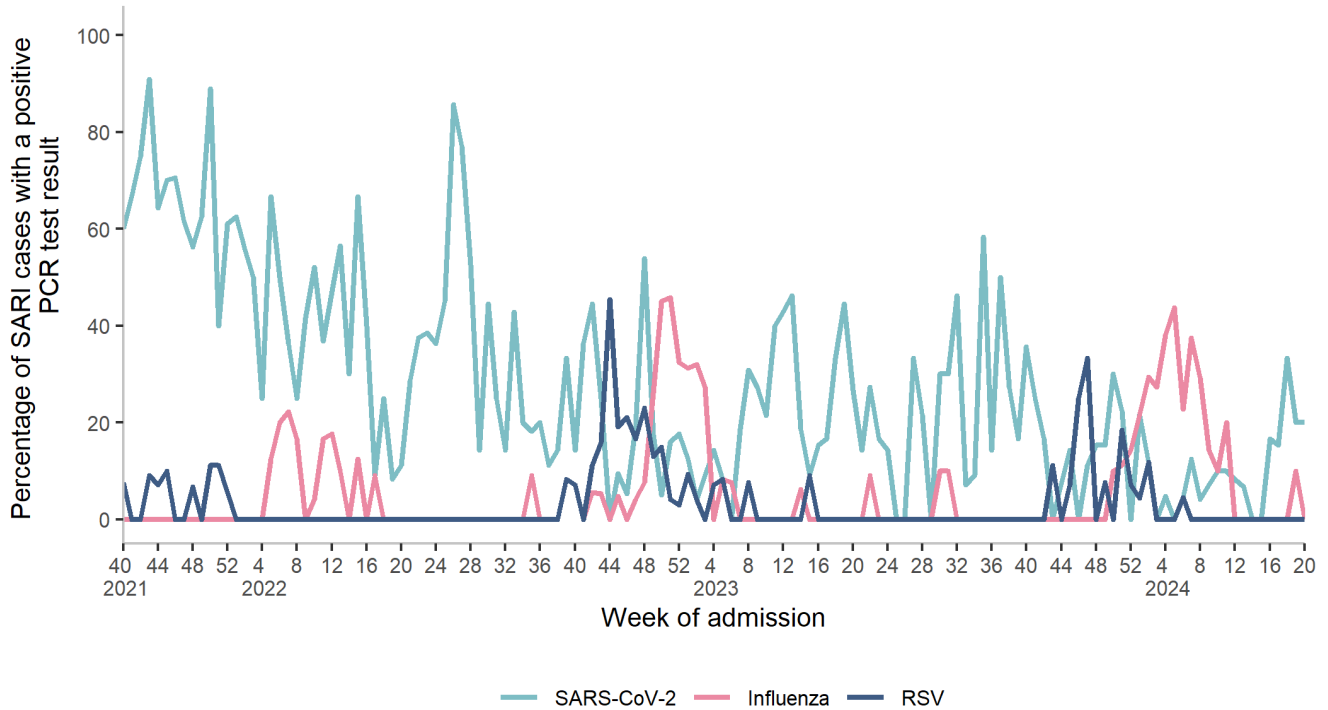


Figure 3: Percentage of SARI cases with a positive laboratory test result for SARS-CoV-2, influenza and RSV by week, from week 40 2021 to week 20 2024.

Table 6: Number of positive SARS-CoV-2, influenza, and RSV SARI cases, influenza type/subtype for the current week, previous two weeks (week 19 2024, week 18 2024), current 2023/2024 season (weeks 40 2023 - 20 2024), and the previous 2022/2023 season (weeks 40 2022 - 20 2023)

Period	Individual weeks			Current season	Previous season
	W20 2024	W19 2024	W18 2024	W40 2023 - W20 2024	W40 2022 - W20 2023
SARS-CoV-2					
Total tested	15	10	18	467	549
Positive	3 (20.0%)	2 (20.0%)	6 (33.3%)	59 (12.6%)	110 (20.0%)
RSV					
Total tested	15	10	18	467	545
Positive	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	19 (4.1%)	42 (7.7%)
Influenza					
Total tested	15	10	18	467	545
Positive	0 (0.0%)	1 (10.0%)	0 (0.0%)	55 (11.8%)	67 (12.3%)
Influenza AH3	0 (0.0%)	1 (10.0%)	0 (0.0%)	32 (6.9%)	31 (5.7%)
Influenza A (H1)pdm09	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	17 (3.6%)	30 (5.5%)
Influenza A(not subtyped)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (1.3%)	4 (0.7%)
Influenza B (Victoria)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (0.4%)
Influenza B (unspecified)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)

In the current season, two cases with co-infections were reported; one case tested positive for SARS CoV-2 and influenza AH3, and one case tested positive for SARS CoV-2 and RSV.

Genomic analysis

SARS-CoV-2

There can be a lag-time before WGS results are available. The WGS data presented is up to week 19 2024

Sequencing results have been received for 386 SARI cases admitted between week 40 2021 and week 19 2024 (Figure 4).

BA.2 sub-lineage JN.1 is the dominant variant circulating among SARI cases admitted to the hospital site in the current season. Among SARS-CoV-2 positive SARI cases admitted during the current season, for whom WGS data are available, 34 (68.0%) were variant BA.2 sub-lineage JN.1 (and its

sub-lineages), 8 (16.0%) were XBB.1.5-like lineages, and 8 (16.0%) were XBB.1.5-like+F456L mutation.

Further information on SARI variants is available in the appendix (Table A1 and A2). For further information on circulating variants in Ireland, see the COVID-19 virus variants reports on the HPSC website³.

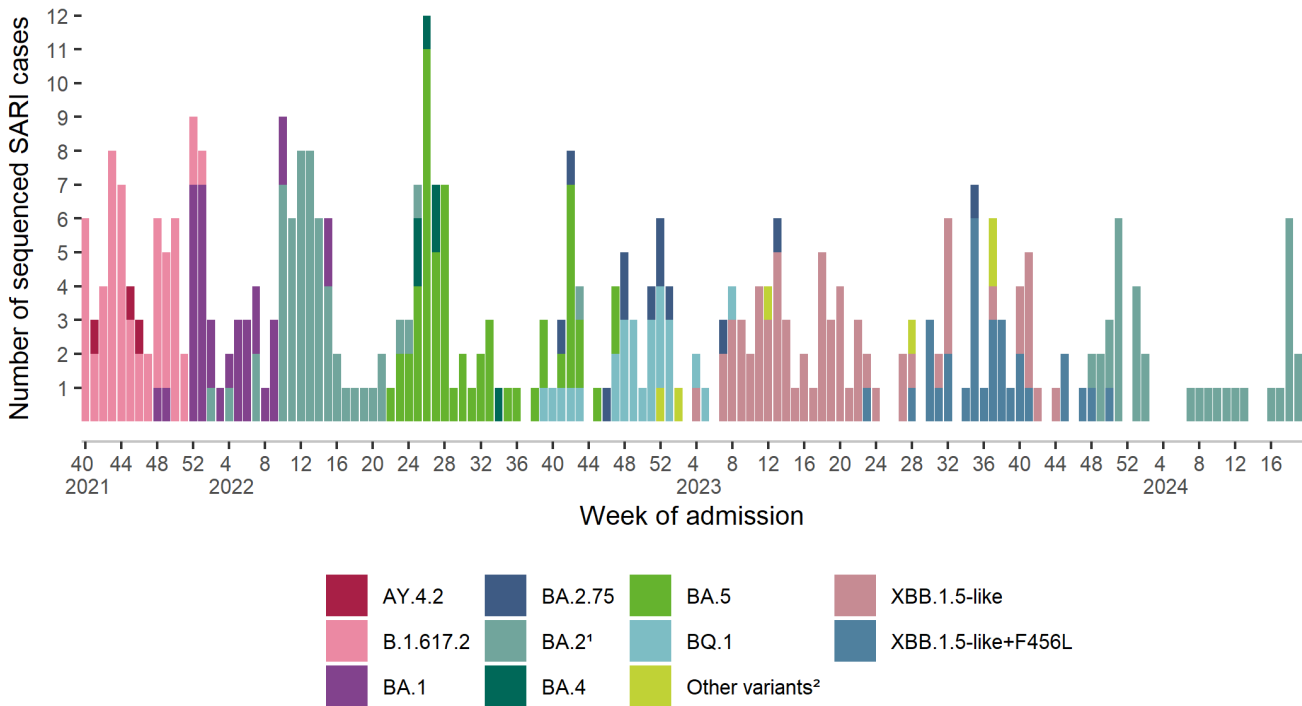


Figure 4: Number of SARI cases sequenced and reported, by week of hospitalisation, week 40 2021 to week 19 2024 (n=386)

¹ Includes sub-lineage JN.1

² All other variants

Note: As described by the ECDC, ‘XBB.1.5-like’ and ‘XBB.1.5-like + F456L’ refer to groupings of lineages that share sets of spike protein mutations

³ <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/surveillance/summaryofcovid-19virusvariantsinireland/>

Outcome

Collection of discharge data is a manual process, therefore there is a significant lag time between patient discharge and data collection.

Of the 480 SARI cases admitted to the SARI hospital site during the current 2023/2024 season (weeks 40 2023 - 20 2024), 380 (79.2%) have been discharged. Of those admitted during the same period in the 2022/2023 season (weeks 40 2022 - 20 2023), 555 (100.0%) cases have been discharged (Table 7).

Among SARI cases admitted during the current 2023/2024 season (weeks 40 2023 - 20 2024) and discharged with known outcome, 40 (10.5%) deaths have been reported, 23 (57.5%) were male and 17 (42.5%) were female. The median age was 84 years (IQR: 76-89 years).

Among SARI cases admitted during the previous 2022/2023 season (weeks 40 2022 - 20 2023) and discharged with known outcome, 52 (9.4%) died in hospital, 25 (48.1%) were male and 27 (51.9%) were female. The median age was 78.5 years (IQR: 74-87 years).

Table 7: Number and proportion of discharged SARI cases by outcome and hospital length of stay, for the current 2023/2024 season (weeks 40 2023 - 20 2024), the previous 2022/2023 season (weeks 40 2022 - 20 2023), and cases admitted between week 40 2022 and week 20 2024

Season(s)	Current season	Previous season	Since W40 2022
Week/Year	W40 2023 - W20 2024	W40 2022 - W20 2023	W40 2022 - W20 2024
Known outcome	N = 380	N = 555	N = 1143
Discharged alive	340 (89.5%)	496 (89.4%)	1029 (90.0%)
Transferred ¹	0 (0.0%)	7 (1.3%)	8 (0.7%)
Died in hospital	40 (10.5%)	52 (9.4%)	106 (9.3%)
Hospital length of stay (days)			
Mean	10	13	12
Median	6	6	6
Interquartile range	3-14	3-12	3-12
Range	1-63	1-271	1-271

¹ Transferred to another hospital

Vaccination status

Vaccination data are available approximately one week after cases are notified to HPSC, therefore the vaccination status for the current week's SARI cases is recorded as unknown.

COVID-19 vaccination status

Amongst SARI cases, admitted in the current season who were PCR positive for SARS-CoV-2 and with known COVID-19 vaccination status, 24 (54.5%) had not received a vaccine dose within the six months prior to their episode of illness (Table 8).

Characteristics of **all** SARI cases by time since last COVID-19 vaccine dose and symptom onset during the current season are presented in the Appendix (Table A3).

Please refer to the technical notes for the full list of definitions on COVID-19 vaccination status.

Table 8: Characteristics of SARS-CoV-2 positive SARI cases by time since last COVID-19 vaccine dose and hospitalisation during the current season (weeks 40 2023 - 20 2024)

Note: SARS-CoV-2 positive SARI cases with unknown vaccination status, n=15 (25.4%) are excluded

Characteristic	weeks 40 2023 - 20 2024		
	<180 days, N = 20 ¹	>=180 days, N = 24 ¹	Not vaccinated, N = 0 ¹
Total	20 (45.5%)	24 (54.5%)	0 (0.0%)
Age(years)			
Mean	78	74	-
Median	78	75	-
IQR	73 - 82	70 - 84	-
Range	65 - 91	33 - 94	-
Gender			
Female	8 (47.1%)	9 (52.9%)	0 (0.0%)
Male	12 (44.4%)	15 (55.6%)	0 (0.0%)
Age groups (years)			
15-49	0 (0.0%)	1 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)
50-69	3 (37.5%)	5 (62.5%)	0 (0.0%)
70+	17 (48.6%)	18 (51.4%)	0 (0.0%)
Patient residence			
Residential care facility	6 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Private residence/home	14 (40.0%)	21 (60.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Other residence	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Patient residence not known	0 (0.0%)	3 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Underlying medical conditions			
Yes	20 (45.5%)	24 (54.5%)	0 (0.0%)
No	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Unknown	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)

¹n (%)

Influenza vaccination status

Amongst the SARI cases, admitted in the current season (weeks 40 2023 - 20 2024), who were PCR positive for influenza and with known vaccination status (n=52), 23 (44.2%) had not received a dose of the current season's vaccine prior to their episode of illness (Table 9).

Table 9: Characteristics of influenza positive SARI cases by influenza vaccination status during the current season (weeks 40 2023 - 20 2024)

Note: Influenza positive SARI cases with unknown vaccination status, n=3 (5.5%) are excluded

Characteristic	weeks 40 2023 - 20 2024	
	Vaccinated, N = 29 ¹	Not vaccinated, N = 23 ¹
Total	29 (55.8%)	23 (44.2%)
Age(years)		
Mean	77	70
Median	81	72
IQR	72 - 84	60 - 80
Range	39 - 90	41 - 100
Gender		
Female	13 (48.1%)	14 (51.9%)
Male	16 (64.0%)	9 (36.0%)
Age groups (years)		
15-49	2 (50.0%)	2 (50.0%)
50-69	3 (27.3%)	8 (72.7%)
70+	24 (64.9%)	13 (35.1%)
Patient residence		
Residential care facility	5 (41.7%)	7 (58.3%)
Private residence/home	24 (60.0%)	16 (40.0%)
Other residence	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Patient residence not known	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Underlying medical conditions		
Yes	27 (57.4%)	20 (42.6%)
No	2 (40.0%)	3 (60.0%)
Unknown	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)

¹n (%)

Acknowledgements

Sincere thanks are extended to all those who participate in SARI surveillance, including those in St. Vincent's University Hospital, the UCD Clinical Research Centre and the National Virus Reference Laboratory. Thanks to members of the HSE Integrated Information Services (IIS) for work on the SARI-COVAX data linkages.

This report was produced by the SARI surveillance team at HPSC, using R studio software.

Technical notes

1. SARI case
 - A SARI case refers to an individual patient episode of care.
2. Vaccination status⁴.
 - For the purposes of SARI surveillance, vaccination status of cases is as follows:

Vaccinated: A case who received their last primary COVID-19 vaccine dose ≥ 14 days prior to the date of symptom onset or their last booster COVID-19 vaccine dose ≥ 7 days prior to the date of symptom onset.

Time since vaccination: For vaccinated cases, time since vaccination is calculated by subtracting the date of vaccination from the date of symptom onset and categorised as <180 days or ≥ 180 days since vaccination.

Not vaccinated, if the following applies:

- Vaccination record on the National COVID-19 Immunisation system indicates the person was vaccinated after the date of symptom onset.
- The SARI patient was reported as not vaccinated on the SARI hospital clinical questionnaire, and there is no identifiable linked record of COVID-19 vaccination on the National COVID-19 Immunisation system.

Vaccine status unknown, if:

- The SARI patient is reported on the SARI hospital clinical questionnaire as vaccinated, however there is no identifiable linked record of COVID-19 vaccination on the National COVID-19 Immunisation system. Vaccination status is reported as unknown, until verified on the National COVID-19 Immunisation system.
- The SARI patient is reported on the SARI hospital clinical questionnaire as vaccination status unknown, AND there is no identifiable linked record of COVID-19 vaccination on the National COVID-19 Immunisation system

⁴ Refer to www.hse.ie for further information on the COVID-19 vaccination rollout

Appendix

Table A1

Number and proportion of SARI cases sequenced and reported, by pango lineage and variant, admitted during the 2023/2024 season, weeks 40 2023 - 19 2024 (n=50)

Virus Variant	Pango Lineage	Number of cases	Sequenced cases %
BA.2 lineages	JN.1	21	42
	JN.1.11.1	2	4
	JN.1.13.1	2	4
	JN.1.4	2	4
	JN.1.8.1	1	2
	KP.2	1	2
	LA.2	5	10
XBB.1.5 like lineages	FL.15	1	2
	FL.9	1	2
	GE.1	2	4
	XBB.1.5	1	2
	XBB.2.3	1	2
	XBB.2.3.11	1	2
	XBB.2.3.13	1	2
XBB.1.5like+F456L	EG.5.1	1	2
	EG.5.1.1	1	2
	EG.5.1.3	1	2
	HK.3	1	2
	HV.1	1	2
	JD.1.1	1	2
	XBB.1.16.6	2	4
Total		50	

Table A2

Number of SARI cases sequenced and reported by pango Lineage and week of admission, for the previous five weeks for which sequencing data are available

Virus variant	Pango lineage	2024-W15	2024-W16	2024-W17	2024-W18	2024-W19	Total
BA.2	KP.2	0	1	0	0	0	1
	JN.1.11.1	0	0	0	2	0	2
	JN.1.13.1	0	0	0	2	0	2
	LA.2	0	0	1	2	2	5
Total	-	0	1	1	6	2	10

Table A3

Characteristics of **all** SARI cases by COVID-19 vaccination status by time since last COVID-19 vaccine dose and hospitalisation during the current influenza season (weeks 40 2023 - 20 2024)

Note: SARI cases with unknown vaccination status are excluded, n=102 (21.2%)

Characteristic	weeks 40 2023 - 20 2024		
	<180 days, N = 198 ¹	>=180 days, N = 178 ¹	Not vaccinated, N = 2 ¹
Total	198 (52.4%)	178 (47.1%)	2 (0.5%)
Age(years)			
Mean	77	69	-
Median	80	73	-
IQR	72 - 85	61 - 82	-
Range	18 - 100	18 - 94	-
Gender			
Female	97 (50.5%)	95 (49.5%)	0 (0.0%)
Male	101 (54.3%)	83 (44.6%)	2 (1.1%)
Age groups (years)			
15-49	12 (28.6%)	28 (66.7%)	2 (4.8%)
50-69	28 (37.8%)	46 (62.2%)	0 (0.0%)
70+	158 (60.3%)	104 (39.7%)	0 (0.0%)
Patient residence			
Residential care facility	48 (80.0%)	12 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Private residence/home	143 (47.5%)	156 (51.8%)	2 (0.7%)
Other residence	1 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Patient residence not known	6 (37.5%)	10 (62.5%)	0 (0.0%)
Underlying medical conditions			
Yes	194 (54.2%)	164 (45.8%)	0 (0.0%)
No	4 (20.0%)	14 (70.0%)	2 (10.0%)
Unknown	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)

¹n (%)