



국내 병원체 감시 결과를 통한 2024-2025 절기 인플루엔자 바이러스 유행 특성 분석

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초 록

목적: 2024-2025 절기 국내 인플루엔자 바이러스의 유행 특성을 분석하여, 최근 절기에서의 검출 동향 및 아형 분포 변화 양상을 파악하고자 하였다.

방법: 질병관리청이 수행하는 국가호흡기바이러스 표본감시 자료를 바탕으로, 2024-2025 절기 17주까지(2024년 36주-2025년 17주) 보고된 인플루엔자의 주별 검출률, 아형별 비율, 연령군별 검출 현황을 분석하였다.

결과: 2024-2025 절기 인플루엔자의 검출은 두 차례의 유행으로 인한 두 번의 정점으로 나눌 수 있다. 첫 번째 유행은 2024년 말에 시작되어 2025년 1주에 정점을 보였으며 이 시점의 검출률은 62.9%로 이전 절기 대비 20-30% 높았으며, 특히 50세 이상의 연령층에서 검출률이 증가하였으며, 주로 A형 바이러스가 유행하였다. 이후 2025년 3월의 두 번째 유행은 B형 바이러스의 검출이 증가하면서 전체 검출 중 50% 이상을 차지하였다. 이러한 B형 유행은 주로 7-18세 학령기 연령군에서 높은 검출률을 보이며 유행 지속 기간도 예년보다 연장되는 경향을 보였다.

결론: 2024-2025 절기 인플루엔자 유행은 이전 절기보다 높은 수준의 병원체 검출, B형 바이러스의 장기적 유행과 고령층에서의 감염 증가가 특징적으로 관찰되었다. 이처럼 호흡기병원체의 유행 특성을 고려한 효과적인 방역정책 수립과 적용을 위해 질병관리청은 호흡기 병원체에 대한 면밀한 감시로 지역사회 유행의 조기 파악과 신속한 대응을 지속할 예정이다.

주요 검색어: 인플루엔자 바이러스; 국가 감시; 인플루엔자 아형; 계절성

서 론

인플루엔자 바이러스로 인한 독감은 대표적인 계절성 호흡기감염병으로, 주로 겨울철에 정점을 이루며 지역사회에 광범위하게 유행한다. 이러한 계절적 유행 특성으로 인해 인플

루엔자 병원체 감시를 통한 유행 시기, 검출현황 및 주로 유행하는 아형 등과 같은 감시 결과는 인플루엔자 백신 접종 전략, 감염병 유행 관리를 위한 대국민 홍보활동, 의료현장에서 환자관리 등 효과적인 감염병 관리 정책 적용의 과학적 근거로 주요하게 활용되고 있다.

Received May 16, 2025 Revised July 9, 2025 Accepted July 16, 2025

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핵심요약

① 이전에 알려진 내용은?

인플루엔자 바이러스는 주로 겨울철에 유행하며, 7-18세의 학령기 연령층에서 검출률이 높은 경향이 있다.

② 새로이 알게 된 내용은?

2024-2025 절기에는 50세 이상의 연령층에서의 검출률이 증가하고, B형 바이러스의 유행이 장기적으로 이어졌다.

③ 시사점은?

인플루엔자의 발생 패턴이 변화하고 있어, 향후 방역 전략을 수립하기 위해 감시를 강화할 필요가 있다.

이에 본 보고서는 병원체 감시를 통해 살펴본 2024-2025 절기 인플루엔자 바이러스의 국내 유행 특성을 공유하고자 한다.

본 론

질병관리청에서 수행 중인 병원체 표본감시 결과, 최근 몇 년간 인플루엔자 및 기타 호흡기바이러스의 국내 유행 양상이 기존의 계절성에서 벗어나 절기별로 다른 유행을 보이고 있다 [1-3]. 2022년 이후, 인플루엔자 바이러스는 통상적인 겨울철 유행 패턴을 벗어나 여름철까지 지속되는 양상을 보였고, 해를 거듭할수록 높은 수준의 정점을 보이는 것으로 확인되었다. 이러한 변화의 원인으로는 코로나바이러스감염증-19(코

로나19) 팬데믹의 영향을 고려해 볼 수 있다. 2020년 초 시작된 팬데믹은 사회적 거리두기, 모임 제한 등 고강도의 비약물적(non-pharmaceutical interventions) 정책 적용으로 인해 중증 급성 호흡기 증후군 코로나바이러스 2의 전파를 효과적으로 억제하였고, 동시에 인플루엔자를 포함한 다양한 호흡기바이러스의 검출도 과거 대비 유례없는 수준으로 감소시켰다. 실제로 국내에서는 2022년 7월까지 인플루엔자 검출이 거의 이루어지지 않았으며, 이후 2022년 8월부터 재검출되며 2022-2023 절기부터 유행이 다시 시작되었다. 2022-2023 절기에는 A(H3N2) 아형이 주로 유행하였는데, 이는 코로나19 이후 인플루엔자의 본격적인 첫 유행이었다. 이어진 2023-2024 절기에는 절기 개시부터 이전 절기에 비해 다소 높은 수준의 검출이 관찰되었으며, 초기 A(H1N1)pdm09이 주도적으로 유행하다 정점 시기(48-50주차)에 근접하면서 B형 바이러스 검출이 점차 증가하여 A형과 B형이 혼재하여 유행하는 양상이 관찰되었다. 2024-2025 절기는 본격적인 검출 증가 시점이 이전 절기보다 다소 늦어지면서 정점 시기가 2025년 1주차였으며 이후 검출률이 급증하며 이전 절기 검출 정점 대비 20-30% 높은 수준을 나타내었다(그림 1). 또한, 겨울방학 이후 개학과 함께 학령기 연령층을 중심으로 2차 유행이 관찰되었으며, 절기 초반 유행하던 A(H1N1)pdm09이 아닌 B형 바이러스의 검출 증가가 확인되었다. 2023-2024 절기 동 시기에 모든 아형의 검출이 감소하며 전체적으로 비슷한 비율로 검출되던 양상과는 다르게 2024-2025 절기에는 B형의 검출이 주로 증가하면서 완만한 형태로 6주 이상 증가가

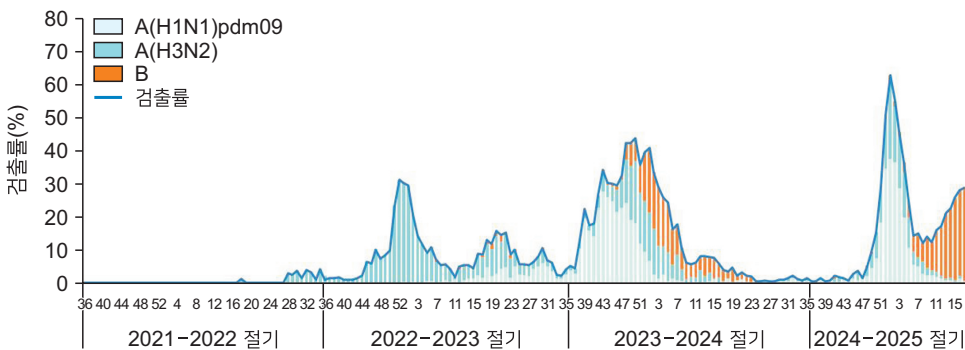


그림 1. 2021-2022년 절기-2024-2025년 절기 17주 인플루엔자 검출 현황

지속되었고 2차 유행을 주도하며 이전 절기의 동 기간 대비 높은 수준으로 검출이 유지되고 있다. 이는 팬데믹 이후 인플루엔자의 계절적 패턴이 점차 회복되는 동시에, 과거와는 다른 유행 지속성과 변동성을 동반하고 있음을 시사한다. 또한 연령별 검출 양상에서도 특이점이 확인되었다. 2022-2023 절기와 2023-2024 절기에는 학령기 연령층(7-18세)에서 가장 높은 검출률이 관찰되었으며, 이는 학교 중심의 유행이 주요한 영향을 미친 것으로 해석된다. 그러나 2024-2025 절기에는 학령기가 아닌 다른 연령층에서의 유행이 확인되었다. 1차 유행 시기인 2024년 50주-2025년 6주 사이에는 50대 이상 장년층 및 65세 이상 고령층에서의 검출률이 상대적으로 증가하여 학령기 연령층과 유사한 수준으로 나타났으며, 이 시기의 고령층 검출률은 전년 동기간 대비 약 20% 증가하였다. 그리고 B형 유행이 본격화된 2차 유행 시기에는 다시 학령기 연령층에서 유행을 주도한 것으로 확인되었다(그림 2). 이러한 장년층 이상에서의 유행은 팬데믹 동안 인플루엔자에 대한 자연면역 획득 기회가 줄어들면서 형성된 면역공백(immune gap)의 영향이 확대된 것으로 추정되며, 이는 백신으로 인해 생성된 면역원성도 자연노출 경험이 적어지게 되면 면역 방어능이 저하될 수 있으며, 이에 따라 감염 취약성이 높아진다는 보고와 유사한 경우로 볼 수 있다[4,5]. 이러한 유행 양상은 일부 국외 국가에서도 보고되었는데, 2023-2024 절기 일본, 미국, 호주에서는 팬데믹 이전과 다른 인플루엔자 유행 양상이 관찰되었다. 일본에서는 A(H1N1)pdm09 유행 후

2024년 1월부터 B형 비율이 급증해 3월에는 60%를 초과하였고, 고령층에서 B형 검출률이 1.5배 증가하였다[6]. 미국에서는 A형과 B형이 동시 유행하며, B형이 3-5월까지 지속되었고, 고령층과 학령기 아동에서 감염 증가가 두드러졌다[7]. 호주에서도 4월 이후 B형이 급증하여 전체 인플루엔자의 35%를 차지했으며, 청소년과 고령층에서 높은 검출률을 보였다[8]. 세 국가 모두에서 B형이 절기 후반 유행을 주도했고, 고령층에서의 검출 증가가 공통적으로 나타났다. 이는 팬데믹 이후 변화한 면역지형과 관련이 있는 것으로 보고하였다[9].

결론

2024-2025 절기 국내 인플루엔자 발생 양상은 본문에서 언급했듯이 국외 상황과 마찬가지로 유행 시기의 지연, 아형 분포의 변화, 연령별 감염 양상의 차이 등 다면적인 변화를 보여주고 있다. 특히 B형 바이러스의 지속 유행과 고령층의 감염 증가 현상은 이번 절기에서 달라진 유행 양상으로, 이는 앞으로의 유행 예측과 대응은 과거의 계절성 패턴에 의존하기보다는 면밀한 감시를 통한 변화되는 유행 양상에 맞춘 효과적인 전략 마련의 필요성을 강조하며 방역 정책 수립에 있어 병원체 감시가 더욱 중요해졌음을 시사한다. 이에 질병관리청에서는 병원체는 물론 임상감시를 통한 병원체와 환자 유행 상황을 주시하고 필요 시 호흡기감염병 관계부처 합동 대책반을 운영함으로써 인플루엔자 및 기타 호흡기감염병에 대한 공

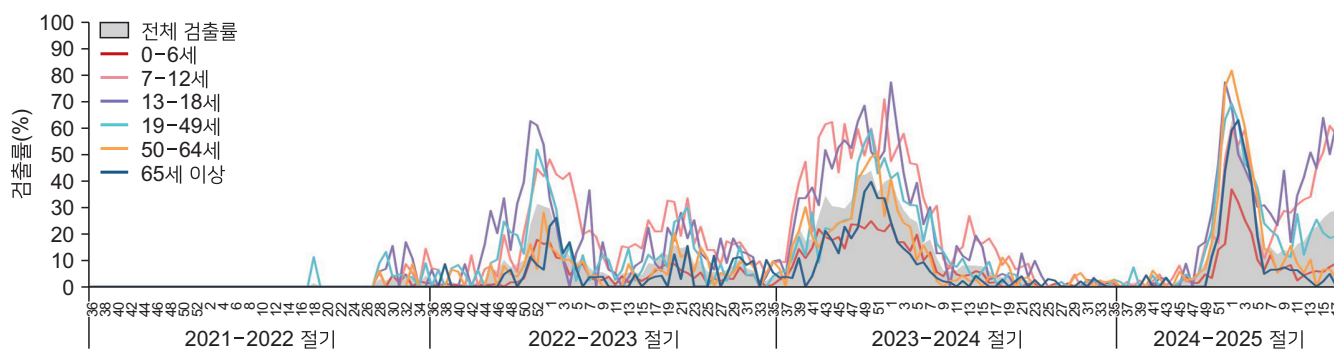


그림 2. 2021-2022년 절기-2024-2025년 절기 17주 연령별 인플루엔자 검출 현황

동 대응체계를 강화하고 있다. 또한 예방접종 측면에서도 국가 예방접종사업을 통한 고위험군 무료접종을 지속하고 접종률 제고를 위한 홍보도 추진하고 있다. 앞으로도 질병관리청은 연중 다양하게 발생하는 인플루엔자를 포함한 호흡기병원체에 대한 면밀한 감시로 지역사회 발생 양상을 파악하고 신속한 대응을 위한 관계부처 간 협력을 지속할 예정이다.

Declarations

Ethics Statement: Ethics approval for the study protocol and analysis of the data was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (KDCA; 2022-02-05-C-A).

Funding Source: This study was supported by intramural funds (grant No. 6300-6332-304) from the KDCA.

Acknowledgments: We would like to thank 18 Public Health and Environment Research Institutes (PHERIs).

Conflict of Interest: The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization: NJL. Data curation: NJL. Formal analysis: SHW, JHL. Investigation: NJL, SHW, JHL, JER, EJK. Methodology: NJL. Project administration: NJL. Resources: NJL, SHW, JHL, JER, EJK. Software: NJL. Supervision: JER, EJK. Visualization: SHW, NJL, JHL. Writing—original draft: NJL. Writing—review & editing: JER, EJK.

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Public Health Issue

Seasonal Influenza Virus Activity during the 2024–2025 Season: Based on the Republic of Korea's National Pathogen Surveillance Data

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ABSTRACT

Objectives: This study aimed to analyze the epidemiological characteristics of influenza virus circulation during the 2024–2025 season in the Republic of Korea (ROK), with a focus on recent trends in detection rates and subtype distribution.

Methods: Weekly detection rates, subtype distribution, and age-specific patterns of influenza virus were analyzed using surveillance data from week 36 of 2024 to week 17 of 2025 as reported by the Korea Respiratory Virus Integrated Surveillance System.

Results: ROK's 2024–2025 influenza season exhibited two distinct epidemic waves. The first wave began in late 2024 and peaked in week 1 of 2025, with a detection rate of 62.9%, representing a 20–30% increase compared to previous seasons. During this period, a notable increase in detection was observed among individuals over age 50, with influenza A viruses predominating. The second wave emerged in March 2025 and was driven by an increase in influenza B virus detection, which accounted for more than 50% of all influenza cases. The circulation of B virus was particularly prominent among school-aged children (7–18 years) and lasted longer than previous seasons.

Conclusions: The 2024–2025 influenza season was characterized by increased detection levels compared with prior seasons, prolonged circulation of influenza B viruses, and a marked rise in infections among older adults. These findings suggest an ongoing shift in population immunity following the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic. To respond effectively to the evolving patterns of respiratory virus circulation, the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency will continue to strengthen its timely detection and response efforts through enhanced surveillance systems.

Key words: Influenza virus; National surveillance; Influenza subtype; Seasonality

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Introduction

Influenza is a major seasonal respiratory illness caused by the influenza virus, typically peaking in incidence during the winter and spreading widely within communities. Owing to

these seasonal characteristics, surveillance findings on the influenza virus, such as epidemic timing, detection status, and predominant subtypes, provide the scientific basis for effective policies for infectious disease control, which includes vaccination strategies, public awareness campaigns for epidemic

Key messages

① What is known previously?

Influenza outbreaks primarily occur during the winter months, with the highest detection rates observed in school-aged (7–18-year-old) children.

② What new information is presented?

The 2024–2025 season was marked by an increase in influenza detection rates among people aged 50 and over, and the circulation of B-type influenza viruses persisted for an extended period.

③ What are implications?

The evolving patterns of influenza outbreaks indicate the need for enhanced surveillance to inform future public health strategies.

management, and patient care in clinical settings. Accordingly, this report aims to share the domestic epidemic characteristics of the influenza virus during the 2024–2025 season, as observed through pathogen surveillance.

Main Text

According to the results of sentinel pathogen surveillance conducted by the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (KDCA), the domestic epidemic patterns of influenza and other respiratory viruses in recent years have deviated from their typical seasonality, showing different trends each season [1–3]. Since 2022, the influenza virus has deviated from its usual winter epidemic pattern, with circulation continuing into the summer months, and has been observed to reach progressively higher peaks with each passing year. The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic can be considered

a reason for this shift. The pandemic, which began in early 2020, led to the implementation of high-intensity non-pharmaceutical interventions such as social distancing and restrictions on gatherings. These measures effectively suppressed the transmission of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 and simultaneously resulted in a reduction in the detection of various respiratory viruses, including the influenza virus, to unprecedentedly low levels compared to those in the past. In fact, influenza was scarcely detected in the Republic of Korea until July 2022. It began to be redetected in August 2022, with epidemics resuming from the 2022–2023 season. In the 2022–2023 season, the A(H3N2) subtype was predominant, marking the first full-scale influenza epidemic since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the 2023–2024 season, a relatively high level of detection was observed from the beginning of the season compared with the previous one. A(H1N1)pdm09 was the dominant strain initially; however, as the peak period (weeks 48–50) approached, the detection of influenza B virus gradually increased, leading to a co-circulation of A and B types. In the 2024–2025 season, the onset of a significant increase in detections was somewhat delayed compared to that in the previous season, with the peak occurring in the first week of 2025. Thereafter, the detection rate surged, reaching a level 20–30% higher than the peak of the previous season (Figure 1). Furthermore, a second wave was observed centered around the school-aged population following the start of the new school semester after the winter break, and an increase in influenza B virus detection was confirmed, rather than that of A(H1N1)pdm09, which had been prevalent early in the season. Unlike the same period in the 2023–2024 season, when detections of all subtypes decreased and were found in similar proportions, the 2024–2025 season was characterized by a

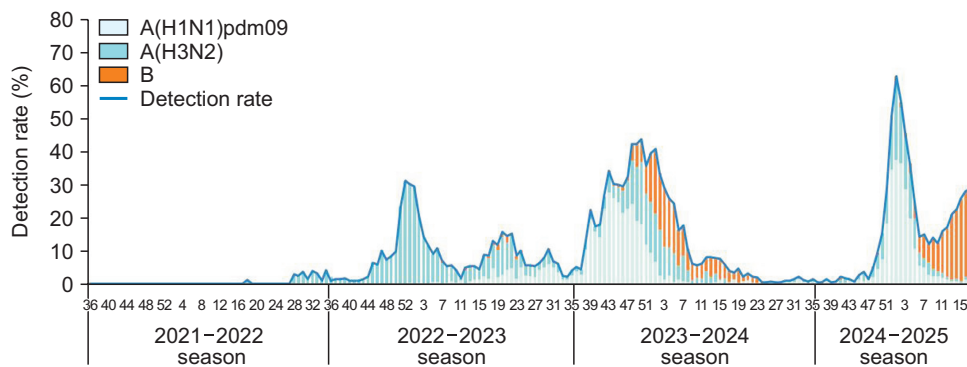


Figure 1. Influenza detection rate during 2021-2022-2024-2025 week 17 for review

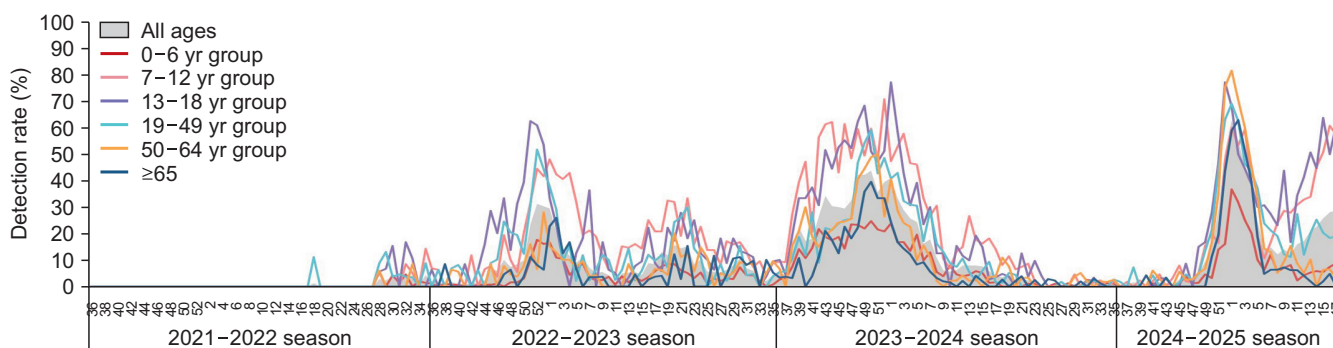


Figure 2. Distribution of influenza detection rate by age group, 2021-2022-2024-2025 week 17

predominant increase in influenza B. This increase continued for more than 6 weeks in a gradual manner, driving the second wave and maintaining a high level of detection compared to the same period of the previous season. This suggests that while the seasonal pattern of influenza is gradually returning after the pandemic, it is accompanied by persistence and variability different from those in the past. In addition, unique characteristics were identified in the age-specific detection patterns. In the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 seasons, the highest detection rates were observed in the school-aged population (7-18 years), suggesting this was primarily influenced by school-centered transmission. However, in the 2024-2025 season, epidemics were identified in age groups other than the school-aged population. During the first wave, between week 50 of 2024 and week 6 of 2025, the detection rate among adults in their 50s and the elderly aged 65 years and above increased

relatively, reaching a level similar to that in the school-aged population. The detection rate in the elderly during this period increased by approximately 20% compared to that in the same period in the previous year. During the second wave, when the influenza B epidemic gained momentum, the school-aged population was once again emerged as the primary driver of the epidemic (Figure 2). This epidemic among older adults is presumed to be an expanded effect of the immunity gap formed by reduced opportunities for acquiring natural immunity during the pandemic. This finding is consistent with reports suggesting that vaccine-induced immunogenicity can also result in diminished immune defense if natural exposure is limited, thereby increasing susceptibility to infection [4,5]. Such epidemic patterns have also been reported in some other countries. In the 2023-2024 season, Japan, the United States, and Australia observed influenza epidemic patterns that differed

from those seen before the pandemic. In Japan, following an A(H1N1)pdm09 epidemic, the proportion of influenza B cases surged from January 2024, exceeding 60% in March, and the detection rate of influenza B among the elderly increased 1.5-fold [6]. In the United States, types A and B co-circulated, with influenza B persisting until March–May, and a notable increase in infections was observed among the elderly and school-aged children [7]. In Australia, influenza B also surged after April, accounting for 35% of all influenza cases, with high detection rates in adolescents and the elderly [8]. In all three countries, influenza B drove the latter part of the season's epidemic, and an increase in detections among the elderly was a common feature. This trend has been attributed to an altered immune landscape resulting from the pandemic [9].

Conclusion

As discussed in the main body, the domestic influenza pattern during the 2024–2025 season has shown multifaceted changes, similar to the international situation, including delays in epidemic timing, shifts in subtype distribution, and differences in age-specific infection patterns. In particular, the sustained circulation of influenza B virus and the increase in infections among the elderly are the altered epidemic patterns for this season. This underscores the need for future epidemic forecasting and response to be based on effective strategies tailored to evolving trends through close surveillance, rather than relying on past seasonal patterns. Furthermore, it suggests that pathogen surveillance has become even more critical in formulating public health policies. In response, the KDCA is closely monitoring pathogen and patient epidemic situations through both pathogen and clinical surveillance and is strengthening

the joint response system for influenza and other respiratory infectious diseases by operating an inter-agency task force for respiratory diseases when necessary. From a preventive perspective, the KDCA continues to provide free influenza vaccinations to high-risk populations as part of the National Immunization Program and is actively promoting vaccination campaigns to improve uptake. Going forward, the KDCA will continue to identify community transmission patterns through close surveillance of respiratory pathogens, including influenza, which circulate throughout the year and will maintain inter-agency cooperation for a swift response.

Declarations

Ethics Statement: Ethics approval for the study protocol and analysis of the data was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (KDCA; 2022-02-05-C-A).

Funding Source: This study was supported by intramural funds (grant No. 6300-6332-304) from the KDCA.

Acknowledgments: We would like to thank 18 Public Health and Environment Research Institutes (PHERIs).

Conflict of Interest: The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization: NJL. Data curation: NJL. Formal analysis: SHW, JHL. Investigation: NJL, SHW, JHL, JER, EJK. Methodology: NJL. Project administration: NJL. Resources: NJL, SHW, JHL, JER, EJK. Software: NJL. Supervision: JER, EJK. Visualization: SHW, NJL, JHL. Writing—original draft: NJL. Writing—review & editing: JER, EJK.

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