



Executive summary

29 March 2023

All four metrics used to monitor COVID-19 trends continued to remain relatively stable or decrease in recent weeks. Reported case rates for the week ending 26 March 2023 remained similar to the previous week. Hospital admissions and mortality remained relatively stable for the week ending 19 March. The viral RNA in wastewater decreased in the week ending 19 March.

In the fortnight to 10 March 2023, XBB and CH.1.1 (a descendant of the BA.2.75 variant) were the most common variants, both accounting for 36% of sequenced community cases. XBB has been growing because of a specific variant of XBB called XBB.1.5, which is responsible for 22% of all cases. The next most common variants, BA.2.75 and XBF, are still present.



Key insights

National Trends

Cases	The 7-day rolling average of reported case rates was 30.7 per 100,000 population for the week ending 26 March 2023. This is similar to the previous week (30.4 per 100,000 as of 19 March 2023). The proportion of infections reported as cases is unknown and may vary by factors such as age and ethnicity.
Wastewater	The viral RNA in wastewater for the week ending 19 March 2023 was decreased compared to the previous week. Please visit the ESR website for further information on wastewater trends. ¹
Hospitalisations	In the week ending 19 March 2023, the 7-day rolling average of hospital admissions was 0.8 per 100,000 population; this is similar to the previous week (0.8 per 100,000 as of 12 March 2023).
Mortality	As of 19 March 2023, there were 186 deaths attributed to COVID-19 in 2023. There were 2,419 deaths during 2022 and 49 ² deaths prior to 2022. The mortality rate, as of the week ending 19 March remained relatively stable compared to the previous week (12 March 2023).
Variants of Concern	Please refer to the latest Genomics Insights Report. ³

Māori

Cases	The 7-day rolling average of reported case rates was 22.3 per 100,000 population for the week ending 26 March 2023. The rate slightly decreased from the previous week, which was 23.6 per 100,000.
Hospitalisations	The 7-day rolling average for the week ending 19 March 2023 was 0.5 per 100,000 population, a decrease from the previous week (0.6 per 100,000).
Mortality	As of 19 March 2023, there were 19 deaths attributed to COVID-19 in 2023. There were 201 deaths during 2022 and 15 deaths prior to 2022.

Pacific peoples

Cases	The 7-day rolling average of reported case rates was 17.1 per 100,000 population for the week ending 16 March 2023. The rate is similar to the previous week, which was 17.1 per 100,000.
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¹ <https://www.esr.cri.nz/our-expertise/covid-19-response/covid19-insights/wastewater-surveillance-dashboard/>

² In a previously published version of this report, the number was stated as 59. This was an error. There were 59 deaths with COVID-19 prior to 2022 but only 49 have been attributed to COVID-19.

³ <https://www.esr.cri.nz/our-expertise/covid-19-response/covid19-insights/genomics-insights/>



Hospitalisations

The 7-day rolling average for the week ending 19 March 2023 was 0.7 per 100,000 population, an increase from the previous week (0.6 per 100,000).

Mortality

As of 19 March 2023, there were 2 deaths attributed to COVID-19 in 2023. There were 133 deaths during 2022 and 4 deaths prior to 2022.