



Executive summary

24 May 2023

Reported case rates for the week ending 21 May 2023 increased compared to the previous week. In the week ending 14 May, hospital admissions and viral RNA in wastewater decreased. Mortality increased slightly in the week ending 14 May compared to the previous week.

In the period 01 April to 28 April 2023, XBB was the most common variant; with the subvariant XBB.1.5 being the most dominant, accounting for 30% of sequenced cases. FK.1.1, a newly designated variant of CH.1.1 has been rising in proportions, accounting for 22%. FK1.1, XBB.1.16 and XBB.1.5 are the fastest growing variants.



Key insights

National Trends

Cases	The 7-day rolling average of reported ¹ case rates was 36.1 per 100,000 population for the week ending 21 May 2023. This is an increase compared to the previous week average (32.0 per 100,000 to 14 May 2023).
Wastewater	The viral RNA in wastewater for the week ending 14 May 2023 decreased compared to the previous week. Please visit the ESR website for information on wastewater trends. ²
Hospitalisationsⁱ	In the week ending 14 May 2023, the 7-day rolling average of hospital admissions was 0.85 per 100,000 population, this is a decrease compared to 0.88 per 100,000 the previous week (ending 07 May 2023).
Mortalityⁱⁱ	As of 14 May 2023, there were 374 deaths attributed to COVID-19 in 2023. There were 2,455 deaths during 2022 and 49 deaths prior to 2022. The mortality rate increased to 0.09 per 100,000 population to 14 May, compared to 0.08 per 100,000 in the previous week (33 compared to 31 deaths).
Variants of Concern	Please refer to Genomics Insights Report #37, released 05 May 2023. ³

Māori

Cases	The 7-day rolling average of reported case rates was 33.0 per 100,000 population for the week ending 21 May 2023. The rate increased compared to the previous week, which was 29.2 per 100,000.
Hospitalisationsⁱ	The 7-day rolling average for the week ending 14 May 2023 was 0.92 per 100,000 population, increasing compared to the previous week (0.73 per 100,000).
Mortalityⁱⁱ	As of 14 May 2023, there were 32 deaths attributed to COVID-19 in 2023. There were 205 deaths during 2022 and 15 deaths prior to 2022.

Pacific peoples

Cases	The 7-day rolling average of reported case rates was 22.2 per 100,000 population for the week ending 21 May 2023. The rate increased compared to the previous week, which was 20.1 per 100,000.
--------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

¹ The proportion of infections reported as cases is unknown and may vary by factors such as age and ethnicity.

² <https://www.esr.cri.nz/our-expertise/covid-19-response/covid19-insights/wastewater-surveillance-dashboard/>

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



Hospitalisationsⁱ

The 7-day rolling average for the week ending 14 May 2023 was 0.68 per 100,000 population, decreasing from the previous week (0.84 per 100,000).

Mortalityⁱⁱ

As of 14 May 2023, there were 6 deaths attributed to COVID-19 in 2023. There were 136 deaths during 2022 and 4 deaths prior to 2022.

ⁱ Hospital admissions data provides information on hospitalisations “for” COVID-19. Data pertaining to recent trends (up to 90 days) is provisional. Admissions may be re-coded as hospitalised “with” COVID-19 and removed from the dataset.

ⁱⁱ The mortality figures are for deaths attributed to COVID-19. Recent trends should be interpreted with caution to account for death coding delays.