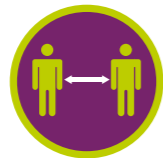


What happened to influenza virus during the COVID-19 pandemic?

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



Travel bans



Social distancing

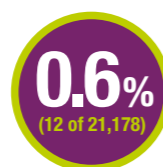


Mask wearing

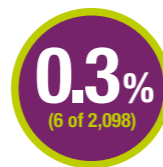
Reported cases of influenza-like illness were also greatly reduced³



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



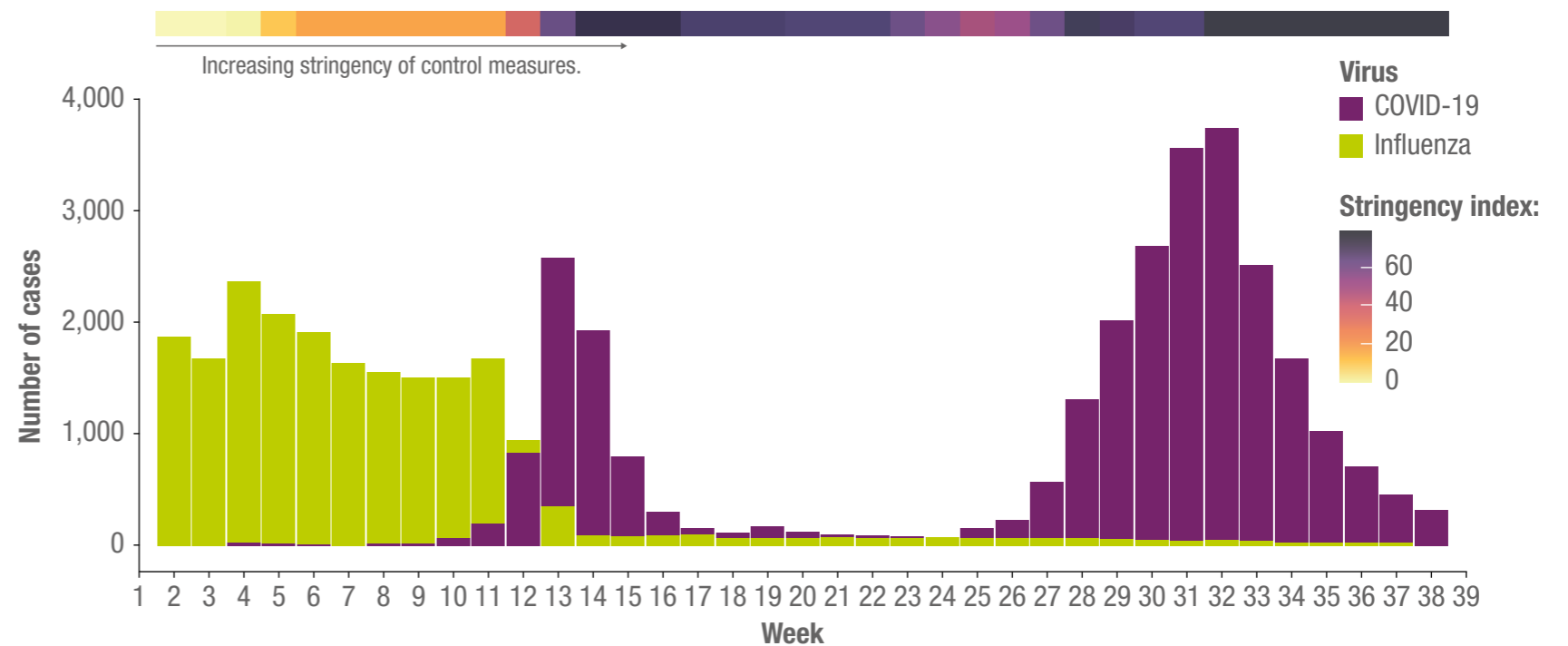
specimens tested positive in Chile
(April–July 2020)



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 influenza⁴

Infected Immune Unexposed



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



Low influenza virus levels



Few viruses for characterisation



Reduced data for WHO vaccine strain recommendations

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

Dr Susan Hopkins
(Public Health England):
“...prepare for a hard winter”⁷

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