

# How does the clinical presentation of influenza compare with that of COVID-19 before the emergence of the omicron variant?

Selected publications were reviewed that compared the clinical outcomes of influenza with COVID-19 before the emergence of the omicron variant<sup>1-7</sup>

COVID-19 cases from 2020

VS

Influenza cases from 2017-2019 seasons

A key difference between the two diseases is that COVID-19 is currently a **pandemic** and influenza an **epidemic**

## Pandemic:

An epidemic occurring worldwide, or over a very wide area, crossing international boundaries and usually affecting a large number of people,<sup>8</sup> due to no or low pre-existing population immunity

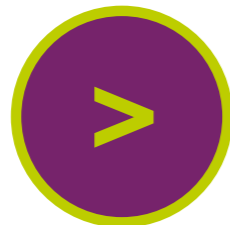
The transmission rate for SARS-CoV-2 was generally higher than that for influenza<sup>1</sup>

R<sub>0</sub> SARS-CoV-2



R<sub>0</sub> Influenza

The proportion of male patients with COVID-19 was higher than the proportion with influenza in some studies<sup>3,6</sup>



% male patients with COVID-19

% male patients with Influenza

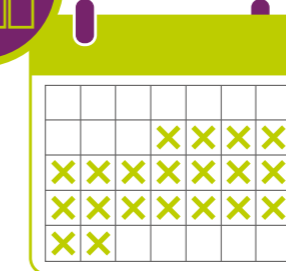
COVID-19 and influenza share several symptoms:<sup>9</sup>

Cough  
Headache  
Sore throat  
Shortness of breath  
Fever  
Diarrhoea  
Runny nose  
Vomiting  
Muscle pain

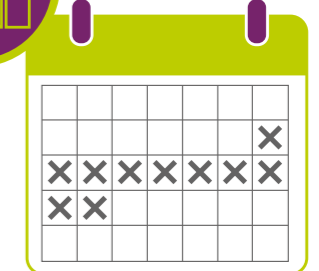
Patients hospitalised with COVID-19 in 2020 had more severe disease and a longer hospital stay than those with influenza<sup>2,5,6</sup>



COVID-19



Influenza



Patients hospitalised with COVID-19 generally had a higher mortality rate than those hospitalised with influenza<sup>2,3,5-7</sup>



The most common complications differ between COVID-19 and influenza:<sup>10</sup>



COVID-19 complications:  
long-term organ damage, long COVID



Influenza complications:  
inflammation of the heart, brain or muscles, multi-organ failure, secondary bacterial infections

Both COVID-19 and influenza have the potential to cause severe disease, hospitalisation and in some cases death

Prof. Dr. Mine Durusu Tanriover comments:  
“Vaccination against influenza and COVID-19 is and will remain our most valuable tool for prevention of severe disease, complications and hospitalisation”