

## **INFECTIONS WITH RESPIRATORY VIRUSES IN PEOPLE OVER 14 YEARS OF AGE IN POLAND IN THE 2017/2018 EPIDEMIC SEASON**

Szymański K<sup>1</sup>., Łuniewska K<sup>1</sup>., Hallmann-Szelińska E<sup>1</sup>., Kowalczyk D<sup>1</sup>., Masny A<sup>1</sup>, Brydak LB<sup>1,2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>Department of Influenza Research, National Influenza Centre, National Institute of Public Health – National Institute of Hygiene, Chocimska 24, 00-791 Warsaw, Poland, kszymani@pzh.gov.pl

<sup>2</sup>Head of the Department of Influenza Research, Director of the National Influenza Centre, National Institute of Public Health – National Institute of Hygiene, Chocimska 24, 00-791 Warsaw, Poland,

The most vulnerable to influenza complications are older people with impaired immunity. The clinical picture of infection with influenza viruses includes symptoms such as chills, increased body temperature, dry cough, even chest pain or dizziness, as well as headaches and muscle aches. In the diagnosis of influenza, quick and effective tests are necessary. Quick tests are characterized by about 70% efficiency, but the result is obtained after a couple of minutes. Sensitive methods of molecular biology require more time, but the obtained result confirms or excludes the presence of genetic material of influenza viruses or other respiratory viruses. Vaccination plays an important role in combating influenza viruses. Unfortunately, in Poland, awareness of the benefits of vaccination is insufficient. In the 2017/2018 epidemic season more than 4,000 people over the age of 14 were examined. The most confirmed infections were reported in older people, over 65 years of age, from the high-risk group. A low percentage of the vaccinated population may affect an increased number of confirmed influenza viruses in the elderly. Research shows the need to increase awareness of the benefits of vaccinations, especially among people over 65.