ImageTrend Short Report

November 2025 Short Report: Influenza-Like Illness in the Prehospital Setting

By Macall Leslie Salewon, MPH, Epidemiologist

Background

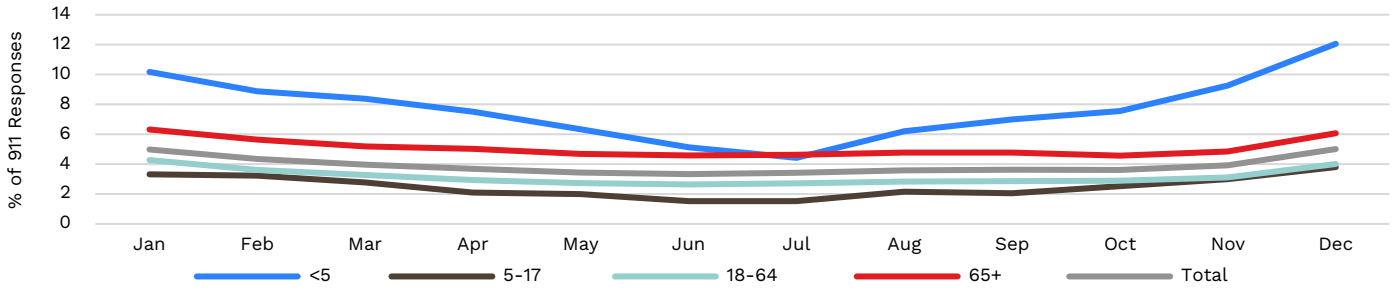
Seasonal respiratory viruses, including influenza and COVID-19, have a substantial impact on healthcare systems and, in particularly severe years, may strain resources and capacity.[1, 2] "Influenza-like illness" (ILI) is a syndrome, or symptom-based categorization, often used in seasonal respiratory virus surveillance that may have benefit in classifying cases in the prehospital setting where pathogen specific diagnoses are lacking.[3] In the prehospital setting, care of suspected ILI patients focuses on providing supportive care and identifying risk factors for prehospital deterioration, especially in high-risk populations such as children, older adults, pregnant people or those with underlying health conditions.[4]

What the Data Show

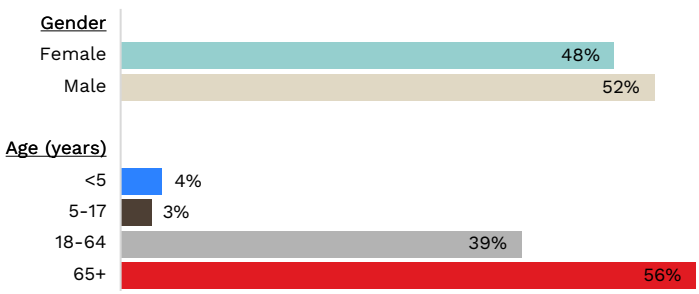
Overall, **304,506** patient encounters met the ILI definition in the 2024 Collaborate dataset.

Accounting for **4%** of all 911 responses with patient contact (n=7,778,410)

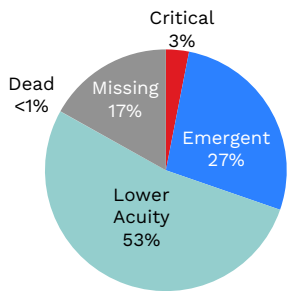
Prehospital ILI Cases by CDC Age Group and Month



Prehospital ILI Case Demographics



Initial Patient Acuity



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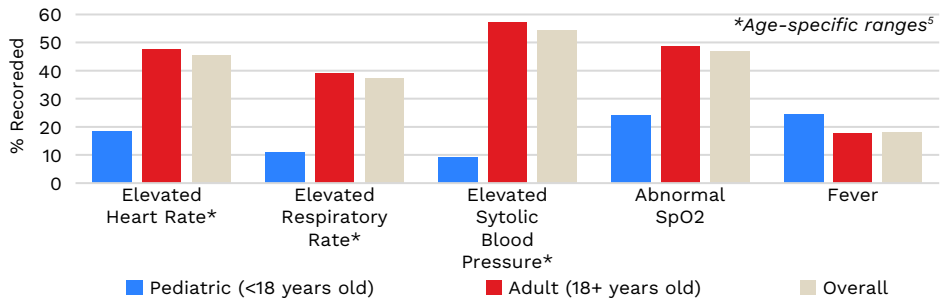
Abnormal Vital Signs



Approximately **1 out of every 4** ILI cases had 1 abnormal vital sign recorded during the encounter, and **2 out of 3** had multiple

Medications Administered by EMS:

33% recieved at least one of the 3 medication categories:

- **11%** bronchodilators
- **3%** sterioids
- **28%** oxygen

Transport:

88% were transported

- **91%** of patients 65+ were transported

5% left against medical advice

- Highest in pediatric cases (**14%** of <5 years old, **15%** 5-17 years old)

Call to Action

Anticipate seasonal strain on local healthcare system. Ensure clear lines of communication with local facilities on capacity

Encourage staff and community uptake of vaccines against seasonal respiratory viruses, especially in high-risk populations

Prepare clinicians for risk communication and mitigation in transport refusals, particularly with caregivers of pediatric patients

About the data: This analysis was conducted using the ImageTrend Collaborate™ dataset, a representative national EMS research resource[4] consisting of de-identified data from agencies that opt into data-sharing. ILI cases were identified among 9-1-1 EMS activations with patient contact using the NEMSIS TAC definition.[2]

Citations:

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Flu Burden: Facts About Estimated Flu Burden. August 14, 2024. https://www.cdc.gov/flu-burden/php/about/faq.html
2. Janke AT, et al. Emergency Department Care for Children During the 2022 Viral Respiratory Illness Surge. JAMA Netw Open. 2023;6(12):e2346769. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2023.46769
3. NEMSIS TAC. EMS By the Numbers: Impact of COVID-19. YouTube, July 8, 2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDlMxxWdDK0
4. NEMSIS
5. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. About Respiratory Illnesses. August 18, 2025. https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/about/index.html
6. Ramgopal, S., et al. (2024). Establishing outcome-driven vital signs ranges for children in the prehospital setting. *Academic emergency medicine : official journal of the SAEM, 31*(3), 230–238. https://doi.org/10.1111/acem.14837

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ImageTrend's Clinical & Research Services team partners with EMS and healthcare organizations to uncover actionable insights and drive data-informed public health initiatives.

Contact: ClinicalResearch@ImageTrend.com
Address: ImageTrend, Inc. | 1305 Corporate Center Dr, Eagan, MN 55121

> Learn more about participating in or conducting research with the ImageTrend Collaborate Dataset here: