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Epidemiological characterization of influenza viruses detected from acute respiratory patients in Korea during 2012-2016

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Influenza viruses cause acute respiratory disease, seasonal epidemics and occasional global pandemics. In this study, we investigated the characteristics of influenza virus isolated from patients with acute respiratory illness in Gyeonggi province during 20012/13-2015/16. Influenza viruses were detected in 400 out of 2,726 (14.7%) specimens by using real-time PCR with viral specific primers. Of the positive specimens, 233(58.2%) were identified as A type, and 167(41.8%) were identified as B type. Among the influenza A viruses, 81(20.2%) were classified as subtype A(H1N1)pdm09 and 152(38.0%) were classified as subtype A(H3N2). Depending on the age groups, prevalence was the highest in the school-age and adolescent age group of 7~18 years. Major clinical symptoms were fever(88.0%), cough(83.3%), sputum(69%) and rhinorrhea(68%). While comparing the diseases associated with influenza A and B, there are no district clinical symptoms that would distinguish influenza A from B. These results obtained from the influenza surveillance system could be used as a basis for preparing for the seasonal or pandemic influenza outbreak.

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