

Rheumatic Fever Report

July 2014 to June 2015

This report provides an overview of rheumatic fever in New Zealand in 2014/15 using both notification data from EpiSurv and hospitalisation data from the National Minimum Dataset (NMDS). The information presented is based on data recorded on EpiSurv as at 15 September 2015 and on the NMDS as at 19 August 2015.

Notifications for initial episodes of rheumatic fever with an onset date between 1 July 2014 and 30 June 2015 were linked with first episode rheumatic fever hospitalisations (as defined by the [Better Public Services rheumatic fever target](#)) with a discharge date between 1 July 2014 and 30 June 2015. Cases that didn't match were followed up to see whether they met the case definition for rheumatic fever (as per the [Communicable Disease Control Manual](#)). Those that did not meet the definition were excluded.

There were 124 cases of first episode rheumatic fever between 1 July 2014 and 30 June 2015, giving a rate of 2.7 per 100,000 population. Of the 124 cases, 99 were both notified and hospitalised, 24 were notified only and one was hospitalised but not notified. A total of two notified-only and 18 hospitalised-only cases were excluded as not meeting the definition for rheumatic fever. Table 1 shows the number and incidence rate per 100,000 population for first episode rheumatic fever cases by age group and ethnic group for July 2014 to June 2015.

Table 1 First episode rheumatic fever cases by ethnicity and age group, July 2014 to June 2015

Ethnic group (prioritised)	0–4 years		5–14 years		15–24 years		25+ years		Total	
	Number	Rate ¹	Number	Rate ¹	Number	Rate ¹	Number	Rate ¹	Number	Rate ¹
Māori	0	-	47	32.4	9	7.2	4	1.2	60	8.9
Pacific peoples	1	-	43	77.3	9	16.6	5	3.6	58	20.9
European or Other	0	-	2	-	3	-	1	-	6	0.2
Total	1	-	92	15.1	21	3.3	10	0.3	124	2.7

¹ Rate per 100,000 population. The denominator data used to determine disease rates for ethnic groups is based on the proportion of people in each ethnic group from the usually resident 2013 census population applied to the 2014 mid-year population estimates.

Note: For categories with ≤10 cases rates are considered unstable and should be interpreted with caution. Rates have not been calculated where there were fewer than four cases in a category.

Current initiatives in the Rheumatic Fever Prevention Programme include the provision of free sore throat services in the community and in primary schools in high incidence areas. These programmes target 4–19 year olds and 5–12 year olds respectively. Table 2 shows the number and incidence rate per 100,000 population for first episode rheumatic fever for these age groups by ethnic group for July 2014 to June 2015.

Table 2 First episode rheumatic fever cases by ethnicity and age groups targeted by current initiatives, July 2014 to June 2015

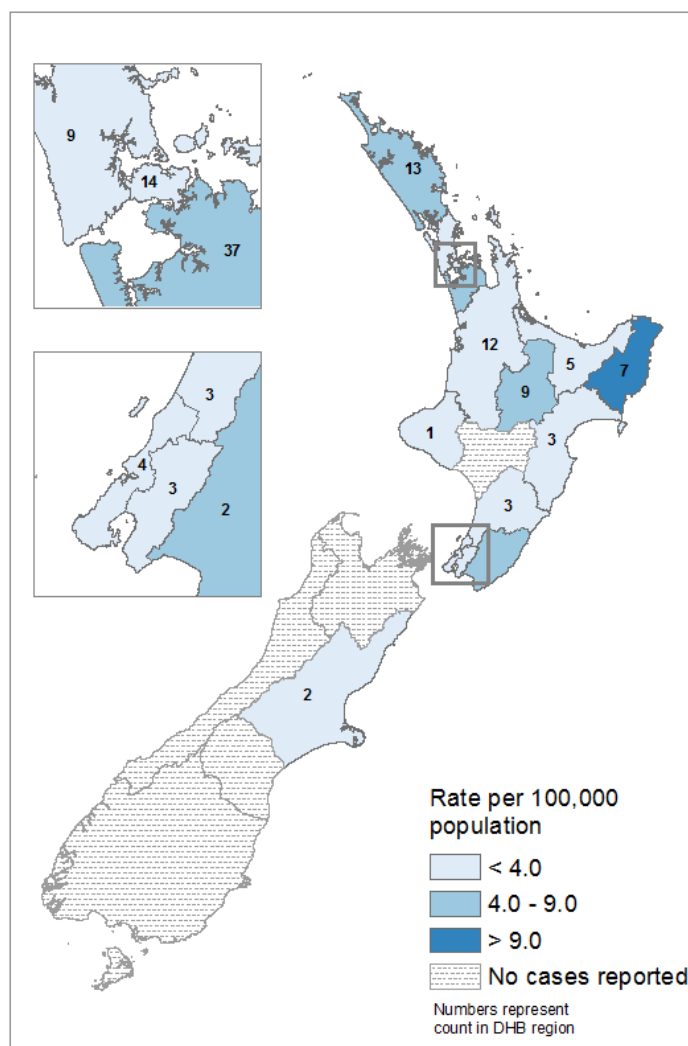
Ethnic group (prioritised)	5–12 years		4–19 years	
	Number	Rate ¹	Number	Rate ¹
Māori	38	32.4	52	22.9
Pacific peoples	33	73.9	49	54.8
European or Other	1	-	4	0.6
Total	72	14.9	105	10.7

¹ Rate per 100,000 population. The denominator data used to determine disease rates for ethnic groups is based on the proportion of people in each ethnic group from the usually resident 2013 census population applied to the 2014 mid-year population estimates.

Note: For categories with ≤10 cases rates are considered unstable and should be interpreted with caution. Rates have not been calculated where there were fewer than four cases in a category.

Figure 1 shows the geographical distribution of first episode rheumatic fever for July 2014 to June 2015.

Figure 1 First episode rheumatic fever cases by district health board, July 2014 to June 2015



For DHBs with ≤ 10 cases rates are considered unstable and should be interpreted with caution.

The official basis for monitoring the Better Public Services target is first episode rheumatic fever hospitalisations. The following graphs show the trend in the rate of hospitalised cases since 2002 for the total population and since 2009 for Māori and Pacific peoples.

Figure 2 Rate per 100,000 population of first episode rheumatic fever hospitalisations, 2002–June 2015

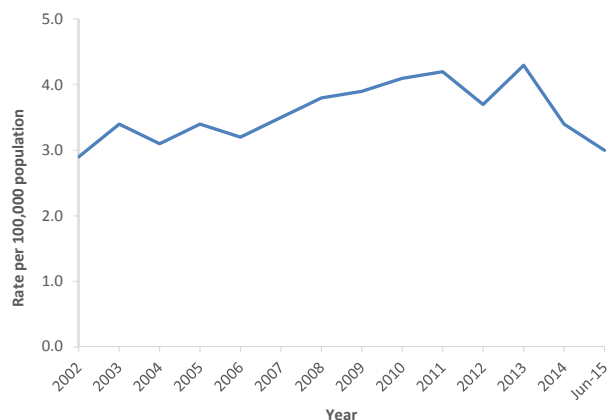


Figure 3 Rate per 100,000 population first episode rheumatic fever hospitalisations for Māori and Pacific peoples, 2009–June 2015

