FluSight 2016-17

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FluSight: Seasonal Influenza Forecasting

NOTE: Forecasting for the 2016/17 season has concluded. Forecasting will resume in November 2017.

Influenza (flu) is a respiratory virus that can result in illness ranging from mild to severe. Each year, millions of people get sick with influenza, hundreds of thousands are hospitalized. and thousands of people die from flu. Tracking flu activity to inform prevention measures is an important public health function that is currently performed by CDC's flu surveillance system, which can lag behind real-time flu activity. But what if it were possible to predict flu activity accurately weeks or months in advance for multiple locations? While this is not currently possible, the goal of flu forecasting is to provide a more-timely and forward-looking tool that health officials can use to target medical interventions, inform earlier public health actions, and allocate resources for communications, disease prevention and control. The potential benefits of flu forecasting are significant.

Since 2013, the Influenza Division at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has worked with external researchers to improve the science and usability of influenza forecasts by coordinating seasonal influenza prediction challenges. This work includes defining prediction targets, facilitating data access, establishing evaluation metrics to assess accuracy, and developing forecast visualizations.

Twenty-one research teams have developed different flu forecasting models and are providing flu activity forecasts to CDC for the 2016/17 influenza season. This beta website houses the weekly influenza activity forecasts provided by the various research teams. It's important to note that these are not CDC forecasts and that the forecasts on this website are not endorsed by CDC. These forecasts are based on different models, can vary significantly, and may be inaccurate.

Interested in participating in the challenge? Please email flucontest@cdc.gov for more information

