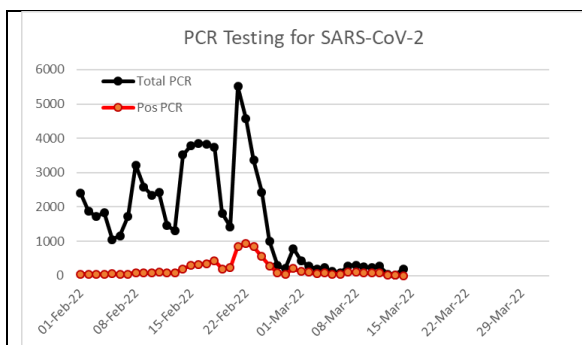
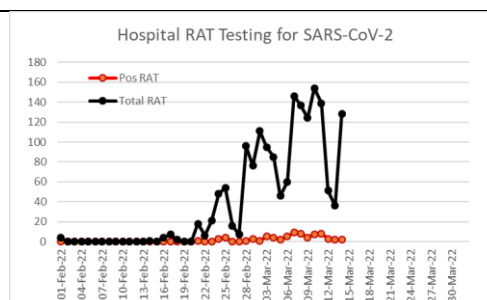


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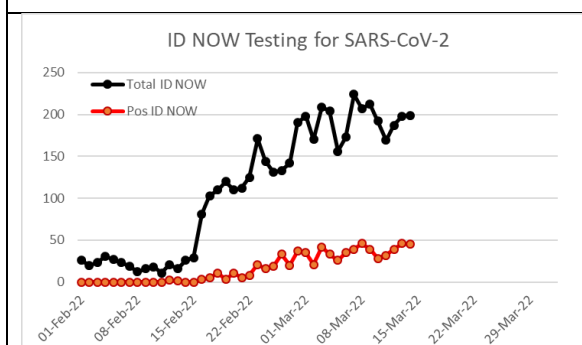
COVID lab testing has changed dramatically in the last fortnight.



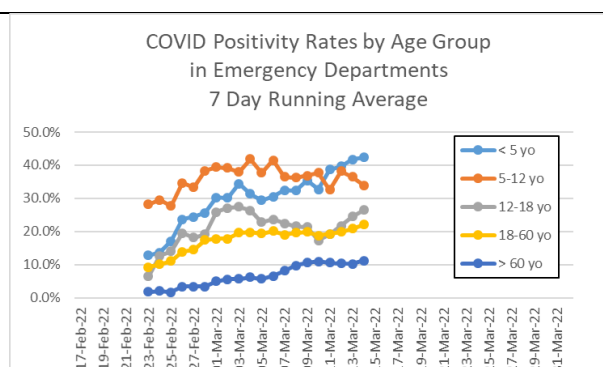
PCR testing is no longer used to attempt to diagnose every case in the region. Its' role is confirming a few selected critical cases. Total sample numbers and positivity rates are no longer informative for regional epidemiology.



RAT (rapid antigen testing) data that we can access through the hospital IT system is mostly from inpatients tested in response to new symptoms or for specific situations such as follow up of exposure, so again is not informative about hospital epidemiology. Hospital staff and population wide public RAT testing doesn't come into our data.



The ID NOW® test is used systematically for patients who are going to be admitted, in Emergency Departments at Waikato and the four rural hospitals. This is a nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT) with sensitivity intermediate between those of RAT and PCR. The test can be completed within 30 minutes and is available 24/7.



This graph shows ID NOW® positivity rates among people of different ages attending our Emergency Departments. Only a minority of these patients are presenting with severe acute respiratory illness. In most cases, infection is simply an additional burden on people with another medical, surgical or mental health condition.

- Waikato laboratory web site and virus report archive: <https://lab.waikatodhb.health.nz/news/>
- NZ Ministry of Health COVID data page: <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-data-and-statistics>
- Radio New Zealand data visualisation: <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/in-depth/450874/covid-19-data-visualisations-nz-in-numbers>
- WHO COVID-19 dashboard: <https://covid19.who.int/>