

Flutracking Report on the Omicron Variant – survey week ending 17/7/22

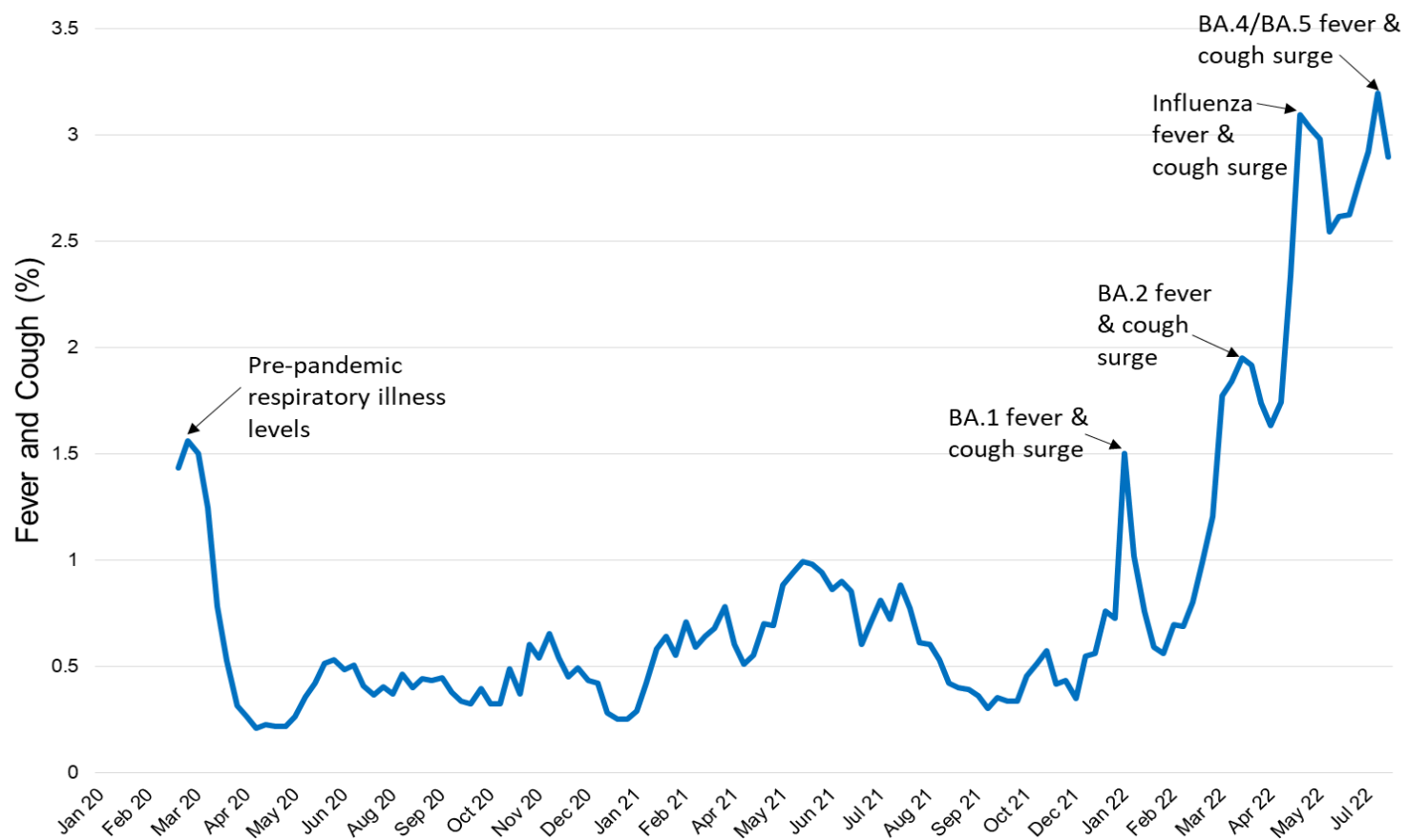
(data downloaded 9am 19/7/22)

Key findings

- Cough and fever rates in Australia appear to have peaked again, and decreased in the week ending 17 July 2022 (Figure 1).
- Fever and cough rates are increasing among First Nations participants, and remain at pre-pandemic levels (weekly report).
- Self-reported COVID-19 RAT testing among Flutracking participants is increasing among all age groups, with approximately 5.4 RATs performed per PCR in the week ending 17 July 2022 (Figures 2, 3 and 4.)
- Among participants with fever & cough symptoms, over 90% reported being tested for COVID-19 via RAT and/or PCR in week ending 17 July 2022. However, PCR testing rates have approximately halved since the introduction of RATs in late 2021, with 30.4% of participants with new fever and cough symptoms tested via PCR in week ending 17 July 2022 (weekly report).
- Percent positivity (self-reported) appears to have peaked for COVID-19 PCRs and RATs, and decreased in the week ending 17 July (25.4% and 14.2% respectively for week ending 17 July 2022), noting also that influenza percent positivity continues to decrease (Figure 5 and 6). Among participants with fever and cough, the percent positivity for COVID-19 PCR and RAT was 56.8% and 53.5% respectively (weekly report).
- Similar to the BA.1 and BA.2 Omicron waves earlier in 2022, the most commonly reported symptoms for those testing positive during the BA.4/BA.5 wave are cough, runny nose and sore throat, noting that the percent positive with sore throat has decreased during this wave. For comparison, cough and runny nose were also the most commonly reported symptoms for those testing positive to influenza in the week ending 17 July 2022 (Table 1 & 2).

FluTracking is a weekly online survey of approximately 60,000 participants across Australia. This report should be read in the context of the standard weekly Flutracking report at <https://info.flutracking.net/reports/australia-reports/>

Figure 1. Percentage of Flutracking participants nationally with fever and cough, 2020 to 17 July 2022.



^Data are age standardised in this chart.

Figure 2. Self-reported weekly testing for PCR vs RAT, Australia, week ending 14 November 2021- week ending 17 July 2022. (Participant count approximately 45,000-70,000 participants per week).

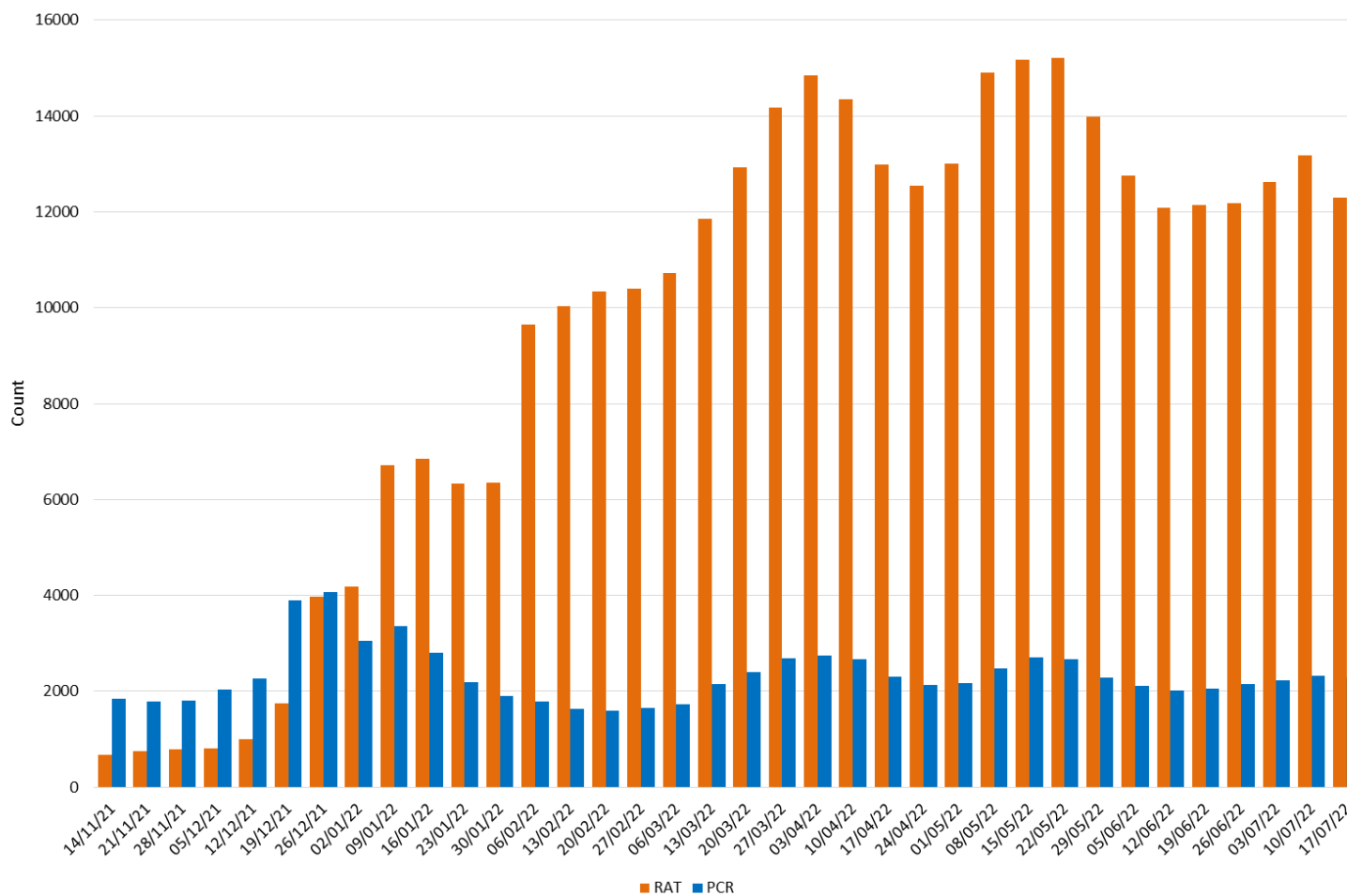


Figure 3. Self-reported weekly testing for RAT, by age group, Australia, weeks ending 26 June – 17 July 2022.

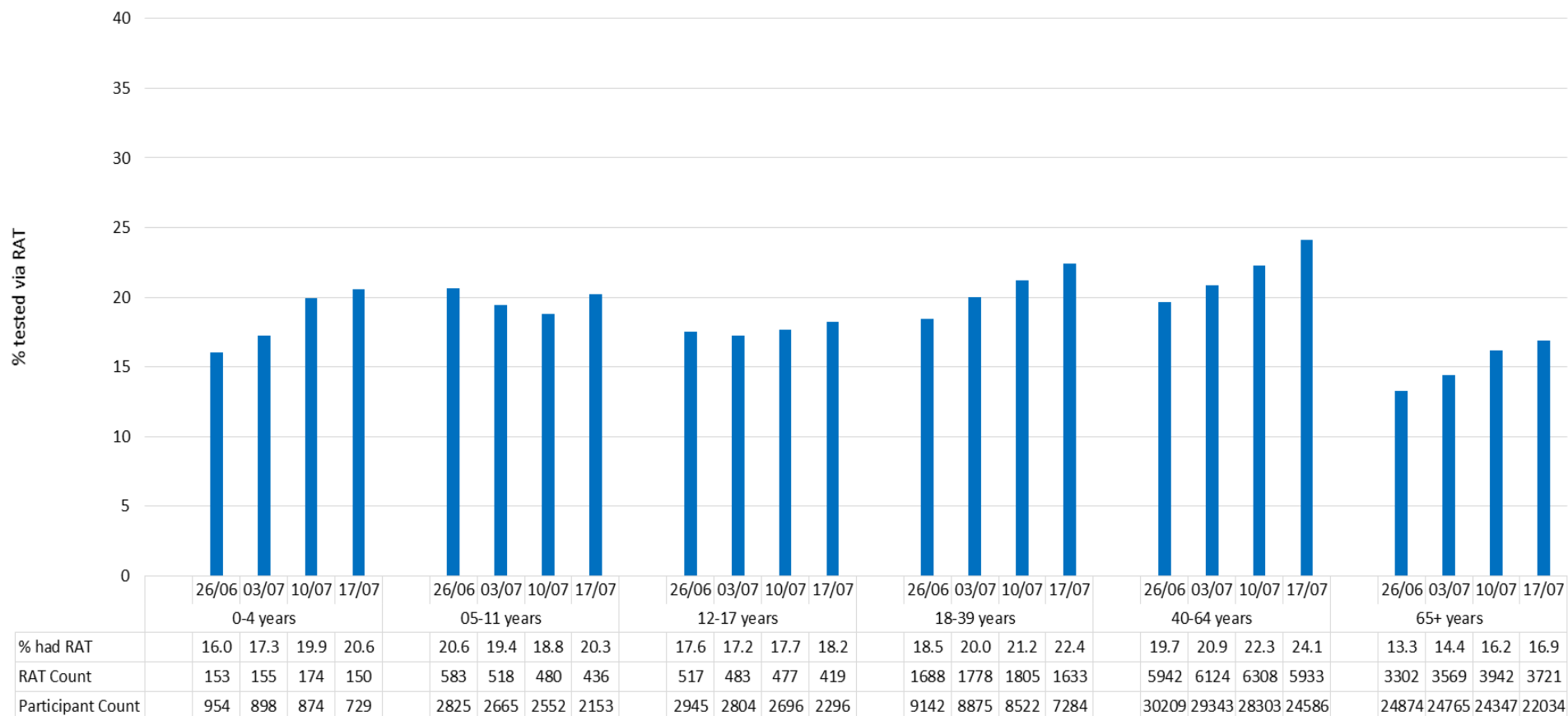


Figure 4. Weekly % of participants who responded to the survey and reported having a COVID-19 RAT, PCR or both in the survey week, Australia, week ending 14 November 2021 – 17 July 2022.

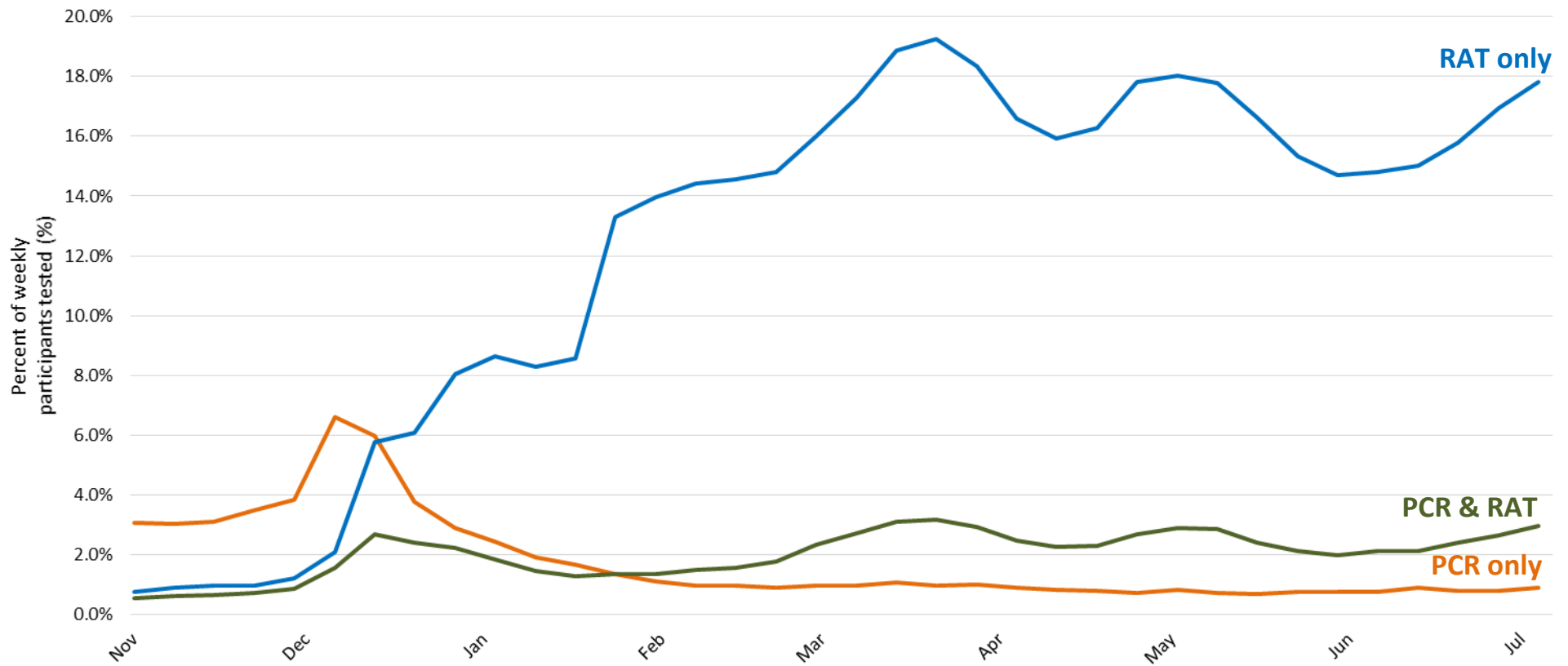


Figure 5. Test percent positivity, by test type, Australia, week ending 14 November 2021- 17 July 2022.

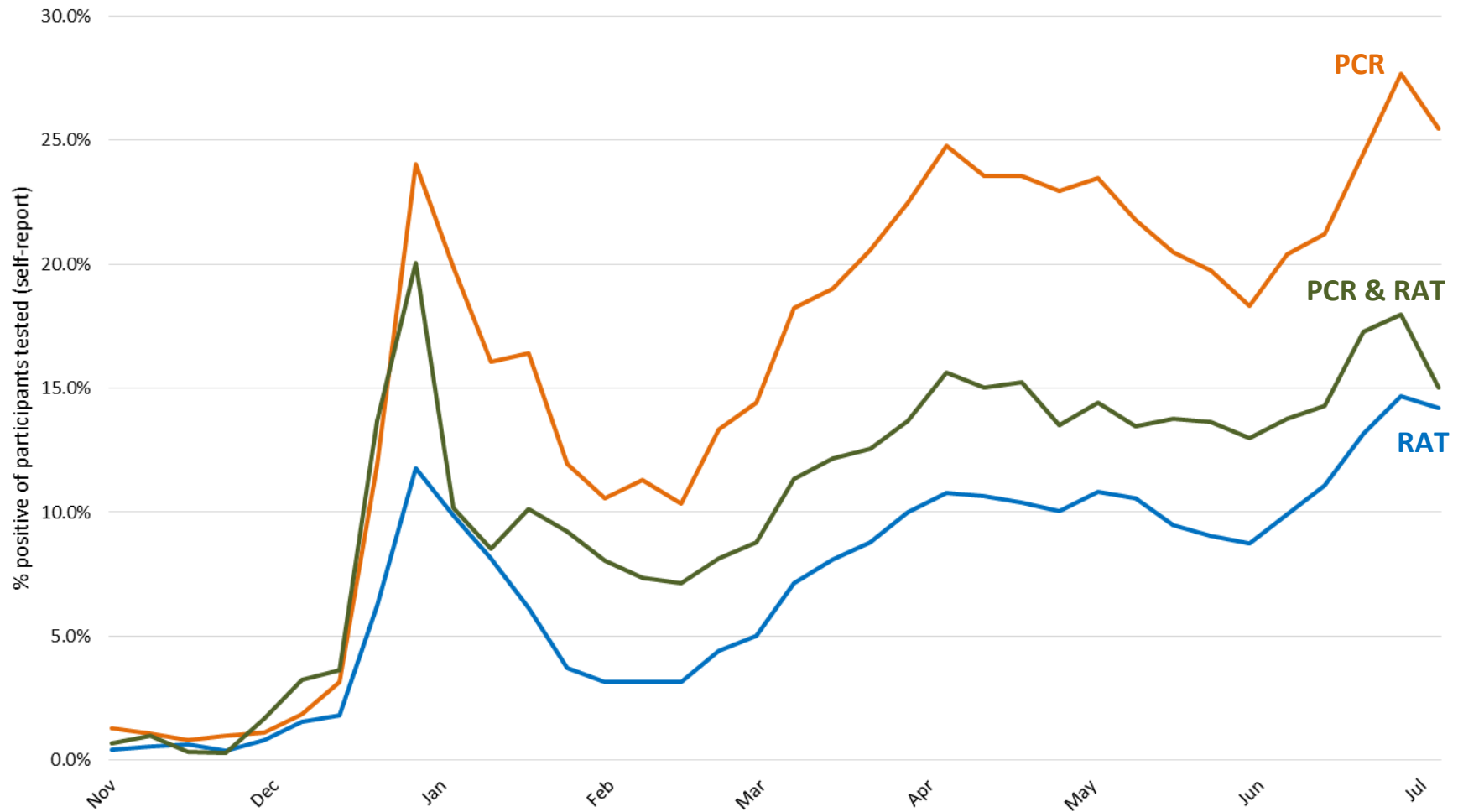


Figure 6. Weekly % of self-reported tests positive for influenza and COVID-19, Australia, 14 November 2021 - 17 July 2022 (includes RAT and PCR tests for COVID-19)

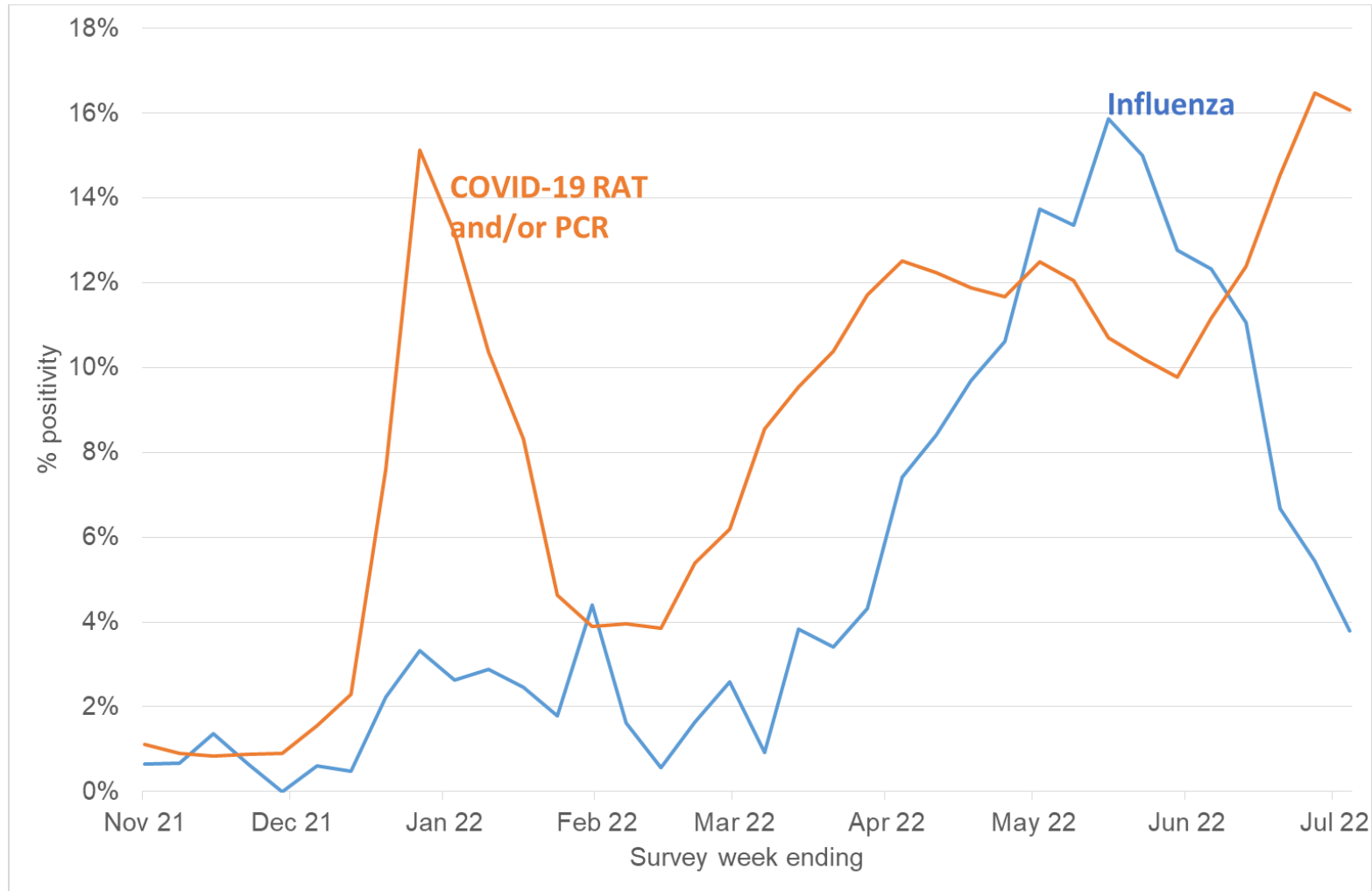


Table 1. Percentage of participants with symptoms among those who reported a positive or negative result among those tested for COVID-19 via RAT or PCR, week ending 17 July 2022

| Symptom | Rapid Antigen Test | | | | PCR | | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|-------|-------------------------|-------|-----------------------|-------|---------------------|-------|
| | Positive RAT N=1743 | | Negative RAT N=10522 | | Positive PCR N=583 | | Negative PCR N=1662 | |
| | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| Change in taste/smell | 521 | 29.9% | 471 | 4.5% | 198 | 34.0% | 116 | 7.0% |
| Fever | 826 | 47.4% | 862 | 8.2% | 314 | 53.9% | 264 | 15.9% |
| Cough | 1530 | 87.8% | 3502 | 33.3% | 512 | 87.8% | 842 | 50.7% |
| Shortness of breath | 524 | 30.1% | 933 | 8.9% | 193 | 33.1% | 263 | 15.8% |
| Runny nose | 1405 | 80.6% | 3969 | 37.7% | 478 | 82.0% | 896 | 53.9% |
| Sore throat | 1214 | 69.7% | 3062 | 29.1% | 436 | 74.8% | 763 | 45.9% |
| Headache | 1203 | 69.0% | 2950 | 28.0% | 433 | 74.3% | 693 | 41.7% |
| At least one of above symptoms | 1704 | 97.8% | 6088 | 57.9% | 567 | 97.3% | 1231 | 74.1% |

Table 2. Percentage of participants with symptoms among those who reported a positive or negative influenza PCR result, week ending 17 July 2022.

| Symptom | Positive PCR N=45 | | Negative PCR N=1070 | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------|---------------------|-------|
| | n | % | n | % |
| Change in taste/smell | 15 | 33.3% | 126 | 11.8% |
| Fever | 21 | 46.7% | 243 | 22.7% |
| Cough | 40 | 88.9% | 651 | 60.8% |
| Shortness of breath | 18 | 40.0% | 203 | 19.0% |
| Runny nose | 36 | 80.0% | 657 | 61.4% |
| Sore throat | 30 | 66.7% | 562 | 52.5% |
| Headache | 32 | 71.1% | 531 | 49.6% |
| At least one of above symptoms | 43 | 95.6% | 865 | 80.8% |

Methodological Notes

1) data collection on RATs was available for surveys from 12 November 2021 onward. The first full week of data collection for RATs was the survey week ending Sunday 14 November for those who complete their survey within 7 days of receiving their survey email, noting that participants can complete surveys for the current week, and the prior 4 weeks.

2) A participant can only report a maximum of 1 RAT + 1 PCR test per survey week, and 1 RAT positive + 1 PCR positive test per survey week.