Death patterns during the 1918 influenza pandemic in Chile

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© 2014, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). All Rights Reserved. Scarce information about the epidemiology of historical influenza pandemics in South America prevents complete understanding of pandemic patterns throughout the continent and across different climatic zones. To fill gaps with regard to spatiotemporal patterns of deaths associated with the 1918 influenza pandemic in Chile, we reviewed archival records. We found evidence that multiple pandemic waves at various times of the year and of varying intensities occurred during 1918-1921 and that influenza-related excess deaths peaked during July-August 1919. Pandemic-associated mortality rates were elevated for all age groups, including for adults >50 years of age; elevation from baseline was highest for young adults. Overall, the rate of excess deaths from the pandemic was estimated at 0.94% in Chile, similar to rates reported elsewhere in Latin America, but rates varied ?10-fold across provinces. Patterns of death