

2.2 Legionellosis

Summary

Number of cases in 2008: 11
 Crude incidence rate: 2.6/1,000,000
 Number of deaths in 2008: 1

In 2008, 11 cases of legionnaires' disease were notified in Ireland, a rate of 2.6/million population. This was a slight drop in the rate recorded in the previous two years but the numbers are small (Table 1). One death was recorded in 2008. Five cases were notified from HSE East, two each from HSE Midlands and HSE South, and one each from HSE North East and HSE West.

The majority of cases (54.5%) were male. The median age was 62 years, with a range from 47 to 82 years.

There were ten confirmed cases and one probable case. The organism involved was *Legionella pneumophila* serogroup 1 in nine cases while the *Legionella* species was unknown in two cases. Urinary antigen testing was the method of diagnosis in eight cases and serology in three cases.

Of the 11 cases, three were travel-associated, one was nosocomial and seven were community-associated.

Countries of travel included Spain (1), Turkey (1), and Bulgaria (1). A case of legionnaires' disease is defined as travel-associated if the patient spent one or more nights away from home in accommodation used for commercial purposes (hotels, holiday apartments) in the 10 days before onset of illness. Travel-associated cases may involve travel within Ireland or abroad.

Pontiac fever

In 2008, there was one laboratory-confirmed case of pontiac fever. There were 36 suspect pontiac fever cases associated with a workplace outbreak of legionellosis.

Outbreak

In 2008, there was an outbreak of legionellosis involving two cases of legionnaires' disease and 36 suspect cases of pontiac fever. Pontiac fever is a self-limiting flu-like illness. The incubation period is 24-48 hours and patients recover spontaneously.

All the suspect pontiac fever cases were diagnosed on clinical grounds and were also epidemiologically linked to the two confirmed cases of legionnaires' disease. None had positive serology. The majority of cases (63.9%) were female. The median age was 35.5 years, with a range from 20 to 58 years.

Table 1. Number of legionnaires' disease cases per million population notified in Ireland, 2000-2008

Age group (years)	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
<30	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
30-39	2	1	2	0	0	2	0	4	0
40-49	1	1	3	0	1	4	8	4	2
50-59	1	0	0	1	1	1	2	2	3
60-69	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	3	4
70+	2	0	0	3	1	1	2	2	2
Total	9	3	6	7	4	9	13	16	11
CIR	2.3	0.8	1.5	1.8	0.9	2.1	3.1	3.8	2.6