

1.7 Rubella

Summary

Number of cases, 2015: 2

Number of confirmed cases, 2015: 0

In 2015, two cases (0.04/100,000) of rubella were notified in Ireland compared to three cases notified in 2014. Of the two cases in 2015 one was in the age group 3-4 years and one was in the age group 20-29 years.

Both cases were classified as possible cases.

One of the possible cases met the criteria for possible rubella case classification; unfortunately no samples were obtained. A second case, also classified as possible, was serum IgM negative for rubella, however, no onset date or rash onset dates were reported and therefore it is not known when the specimen was taken in relation to symptom onset. Both cases had one dose of MMR vaccine. Neither of the cases had an epidemiological link to any known cases so these cases are unlikely to be rubella.

The figures presented in this summary are based on data extracted from the Computerised Infectious Disease Reporting (CIDR) system on 19th August 2016. These figures may differ slightly from those published previously due to ongoing updating of data on CIDR.

WHO require information on discarded rubella cases ie rubella cases investigated and who were found not to meet the case definition. The HSE Areas reported the number of discarded CIDR cases to HPSC. For 2015, 21 cases were discarded from CIDR as following investigation they were not considered to be rubella cases. Discarded cases are not available in CIDR for reporting and are therefore not included in the analysis above.

The Regional Verification Commission for Measles and Rubella Elimination (RVC) was established in the WHO European Region in 2011 to evaluate the documentation submitted by Member States with a view to verifying the elimination of measles and rubella at the regional level. The WHO Regional Office serves as the secretariat to the RVC.¹

The RVC comprises public health experts, including epidemiologists, clinicians and virologists. It includes a

chairperson, a vice-chairperson and a maximum of eight additional members, all of whom are independent of the managerial and operational aspects of elimination activities. The RVC works in close collaboration with the WHO Regional Office for Europe, and reports to the WHO Regional Director for Europe. Its main task is to provide periodic updates to, and coordinate technical and policy issues with, the European Technical Advisory Group of Experts.¹

The RVC has recommended establishment of national verification committees (NVC) in all Member States and suggested a standard format for annual status reports from countries. These reports include information on measles and rubella epidemiology, virologic surveillance supported by molecular epidemiology, the analysis of vaccinated population cohorts and the quality of surveillance, and the sustainability of the country's National Immunisation Programme.¹

The review and evaluation of annual national reports will continue for at least three years after the RVC confirms that, according to established criteria, endemic measles and rubella transmission have been interrupted in all Member States of the Region. Only then can Regional elimination be declared.¹

Based on the data provided by the Irish National Verification Committee in 2014 to the WHO RVC the RVC concluded that endemic transmission of rubella remained interrupted in Ireland in 2014. In view of the reported data for the period 2012-2014, the RVC declared rubella eliminated in Ireland.²

References

1. WHO. Regional Verification Commission for Measles and Rubella Elimination (RVC). Available at <http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/communicable-diseases/measles-and-rubella/activities/regional-verification-commission-for-measles-and-rubella-elimination-rvc>.
2. WHO. 4th Meeting of the European Regional Verification Commission for Measles and Rubella Elimination (RVC). Available at http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/304958/4th-RVC-meeting-report.pdf?ua=1.