

3.4 Hepatitis A

Summary

Number of cases in 2007: 32
Crude notification rate: 0.8/100,000
Number of cases in 2006: 39
Number of cases in 2005: 56

Hepatitis A virus causes an acute, usually self-limiting disease of the liver. It is primarily transmitted from person to person via the faecal-oral route and is associated with poor hygiene and sanitation. Common source outbreaks due to contaminated food or water may also occur.

The incidence of hepatitis A in Ireland has been low in recent years and remained low in 2007, with 32 cases notified. This corresponds to a crude notification rate of

0.8/100,000 population and represents an 18% decrease compared to 2006, when 39 cases were notified (figure 1). Case classification was reported for all cases. Twenty nine cases were laboratory confirmed, one was classified as probable and two were classified as possible.

Fifty three percent of cases were male (n=17) and 47% were female (n=15). All age groups were affected, but the highest rates were in children aged 5-14 years (figure 2). Eleven cases were associated with travel outside of Ireland, nine cases were infected in Ireland and the country of infection was not specified for the remaining 12 cases.

Three family outbreaks were reported in 2007. Each involved two siblings and the ages ranged from three to 11 years. Two were travel associated.

The figures presented in this summary are based on

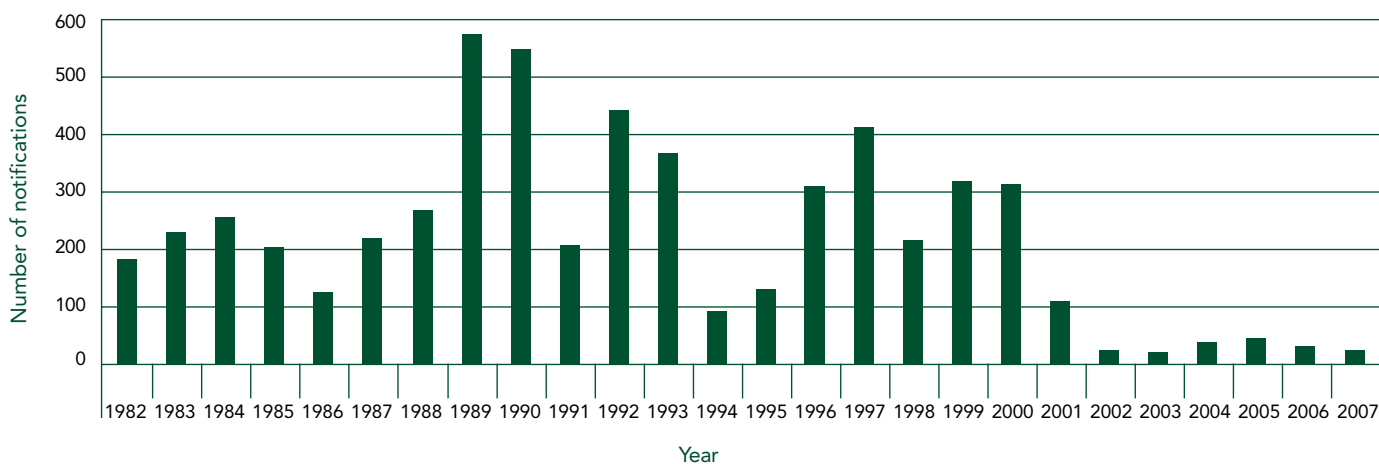


Figure 1. Number of cases of hepatitis A notified annually, 1982-2007

data extracted from the Computerised Infectious Disease Reporting (CIDR) System on 1st September 2008. These figures may differ slightly from those published previously due to ongoing updating of notification data on CIDR.

