

# 6.1 Viral Encephalitis

## Summary

Number of cases, 2007: 8  
Number of cases, 2006: 16  
Number of cases, 2005: 6  
Crude incidence rate, 2007: 0.2/100,000

In 2007, eight cases of viral encephalitis were notified in Ireland, which is a crude incidence rate of 0.2 per 100,000 total population. The number of viral encephalitis notifications in 2007 is half that which was reported in 2006, but comparable to the six cases notified in 2005 and five in 2004. The decrease in viral encephalitis in 2007, compared to 2006 is particularly related to a decrease in varicella zoster virus associated encephalitis notifications.

Of the eight cases notified in 2007, more cases occurred in males (n=6) than in females (n=2) giving a ratio of 3.0:1.0.

Cases ranged in age from two to 83 years (table 1). One quarter of the cases (n=2) occurred in children <10 years of age and 63% were in adults ≥45 years of age (table 1). The highest incidence rates were in children aged

1-4 years and also in elderly adults ≥65 years of age (0.4/100,000 each) (table 1).

The causative agent was identified in all eight cases of viral encephalitis notified; herpes simplex virus (n=5) and varicella zoster virus (n=3). Two of the cases due to herpes simplex occurred in children under 10 years of age while the remaining three cases occurred in adults aged ≥45 years. All three cases due to varicella zoster occurred in adults ≥15 years of age. No deaths from viral encephalitis were reported between 2004 and 2007.

The figures presented in this summary are based on data extracted from the Computerised Infectious Disease Reporting (CIDR) system on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2008.

Table 1. Number, crude incidence rates and proportion of viral encephalitis cases by age group, 2007

	Number	Proportion (%)	ASIR
<1	0	0	0.0
1-4	1	13	0.4
5-9	1	13	0.3
10-44	1	13	0.0
45-64	3	38	0.3
65+	2	25	0.4
All ages	8	100	0.2

ASIR, age specific incidence rate per 100,000