

# 6.1 Viral Encephalitis

## Summary

Number of cases, 2008:5  
Number of cases, 2007:8  
Number of cases, 2006:16  
Crude incidence rate, 2008: 0.12/100,000

Not all viral infections are notifiable, but some can and do cause encephalitis. In this chapter, the focus is on those viral pathogens that cause encephalitis, but are not notifiable in their own right.

In 2008, five cases of viral encephalitis (caused by non-notifiable organisms) were notified in Ireland, which is a crude incidence rate of 0.12 per 100,000 total population. The number of viral encephalitis notifications in 2008 is just over half that which was reported in 2007, and a third of cases notified in 2006. The decrease in viral encephalitis in 2007, compared to 2006 was particularly related to a decrease in varicella zoster virus associated encephalitis notifications.

Of the five cases notified in 2008, three cases occurred in males and two in females giving a ratio of 1.5:1.0.

Cases ranged in age from two weeks to 61 years. Three of the five cases occurred in children  $\leq 5$  years of age and the remainder occurred in adults  $\geq 15$  years of age (table 1). The highest incidence rates were in infants aged  $< 1$  years (3.27/100,000) and also in children aged 5-9 years (0.35/100,000) (table 1).

The causative agent was identified in all five cases of viral encephalitis notified; herpes simplex virus (n=3) and enterovirus (n=2). Three of the cases due to herpes simplex occurred in children  $< 10$  months of age and in two adults aged  $\geq 15$  years. Another two cases were caused by enterovirus and occurred in children  $\leq 5$  years of age. No deaths from viral encephalitis were notified between 1997 and 2008.

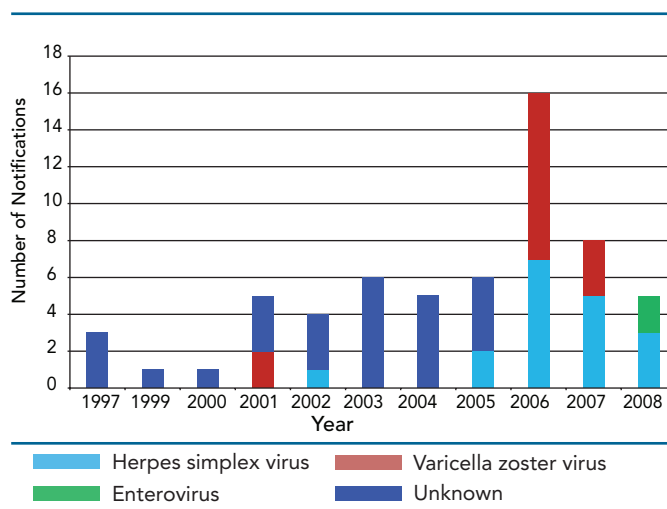


Figure 1. Number of invasive meningococcal disease (IMD) notifications in Ireland by serogroup, 1999-2008