

Interim report of the profile of COVID-19 cases in healthcare workers in Ireland

15/08/2021-11/09/2021

Report prepared by HPSC on 15/09/2021

On 14 May 2021 the HSE suffered a major cyber-attack on its IT systems. While HSE-HPSC and Computerised Infectious Diseases Reporting (CIDR) system were not directly compromised by the cyber-attack, our surveillance partners (Departments of Public Health, laboratories, and others) were. As an interim measure after the cyber-attack, the reported number of COVID-19 cases was based on data uploaded to the HSE-Covid Care Tracker (CCT). The data extracted from CCT did not represent notified cases and had not undergone the extent of data validation which is undertaken by Departments of Public Health and HPSC. All cases were retrospectively notified to CIDR and reporting on the number of cases from CIDR recommenced on 2 September. The number of cases reported from CIDR for the period affected by the cyber-attack will differ from the estimates reported based on interim arrangements.

Not all surveillance processes have returned to normal. The transfer of information gathered during the patient interview, including healthcare worker status, from the CCT to CIDR is not yet restored. For this reason, CIDR data has been merged with CCT data to report on some variables. Further information is available [here](#).

Healthcare worker definition

Healthcare worker (HCW) status is determined both by self-classification and workplace. The definition includes anyone who self-identifies as a HCW irrespective of where they work. In addition, all staff that work in any healthcare facility (includes cleaners, household staff etc.) are classified as HCWs. The category includes HCWs employed both by public and private providers.

Summary

Table 1: Summary of healthcare worker COVID-19 cases notified to HPSC, 15/08/2021-11/09/2021

Characteristic of HCW COVID-19 cases	Number	%
Total number of COVID-19 cases	43,587	-
Total number of HCW cases	1,670	3.8%
Median age (range)	39 (16-78)	
Total number hospitalised	9	0.5%
The median age (range) of hospital inpatient	37 (26-61)	

There was a total of 43,587 COVID-19 cases notified to HPSC as of 12/09/2021, 1,670 (3.8%) were healthcare workers (HCWs).

The proportion of females is disproportionately high (79.3%) among HCW COVID-19 cases compared to non-HCW COVID-19 cases (49.1%), most likely due to some HCW specialities e.g. nursing, being female dominated.

Table 2 describes the profile of all HCW COVID-19 cases, in Ireland notified to HPSC during the period 15/08/2021-11/09/2021.

Table 3 describes the country of birth of all HCW COVID-19 cases in Ireland notified to HPSC during the period 15/08/2021-11/09/2021.

Table 4 describes most likely transmission source of all HCW COVID-19 cases in Ireland notified to HPSC during the period 15/08/2021-11/09/2021.

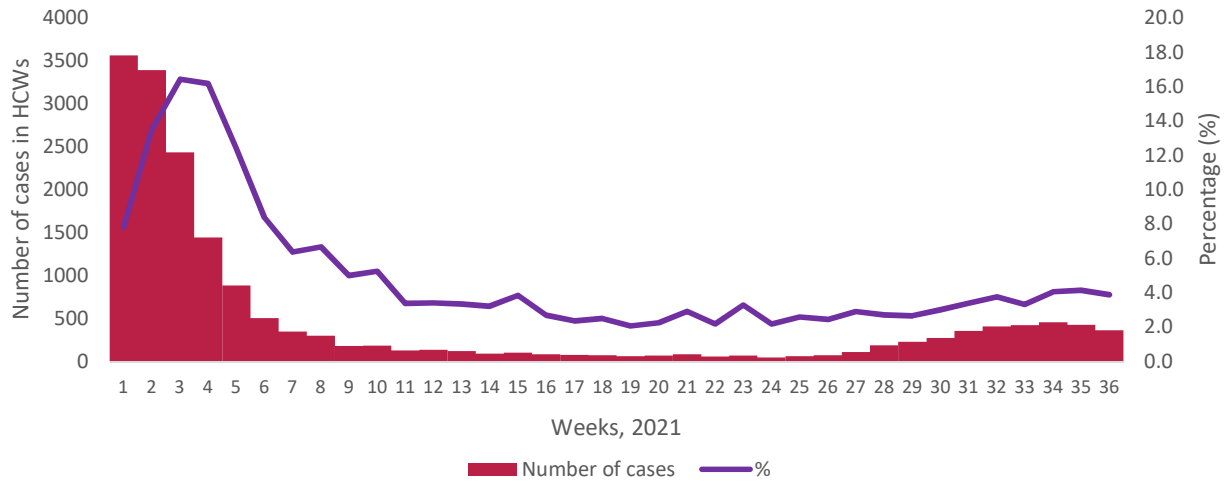


Figure 1: Number of COVID-19 cases and percentage of HCW cases by week in Ireland notified to CIDR (weeks 1-36, 2021).

Table 2: Healthcare worker COVID-19 cases, Ireland by sex, age-group, HCW role and work location notified to HPSC, 15/08/2021-11/09/2021

Total number of cases		N=1,670	%
Females		1,324	79.3%
Age-group			
	13-18	10	0.6%
	19-24	229	13.7%
	25-34	412	24.7%
	35-44	383	22.9%
	45-54	398	23.8%
	55-64	208	12.5%
	65-74	28	1.7%
	75-84	<5	0.1%
HCW Role			
	Healthcare assistant	399	23.9%
	Nurse	382	22.9%
	Admin / Clerical worker	137	8.2%
	Catering / Kitchen worker	74	4.4%
	Home care	71	4.3%
	Doctor	68	4.1%
	Pharmacy worker	37	2.2%
	Physiotherapist	22	1.3%
	Porter	17	1.0%
	Radiographer	15	0.9%
	Occupational therapist	10	0.6%
	Other	280	16.8%
	Unknown	158	9.4%
Location of HCW role			
	Acute hospital	412	24.7%
	Nursing Home	328	19.6%
	Community services	198	11.9%
	Community Hospital/Long Stay Unit	67	4.0%
	Designated Centre for Adults/Children with disabilities	54	3.2%
	Residential Institution (Other, not listed)	54	3.2%
	Mental Health Facility	40	2.4%
	GP surgery	30	1.8%
	Hospice	19	1.1%
	Other HCW place of work	163	9.8%
	Unknown	305	18.3%

Table 3: Healthcare worker COVID-19 cases, Ireland, by ethnicity and country of birth, notified to HPSC, 15/08/2021-11/09/2021

Total number of cases		N=1,670	%
Country of birth			
	Ireland	1,204	72.1%
	India	87	5.2%
	England	76	4.6%
	Philippines	64	3.8%
	Nigeria	28	1.7%
	Poland	19	1.1%
	Romania	15	0.9%
	Other	151	9.0%
	Unknown	26	1.6%

Table 4: Healthcare worker COVID-19 cases, Ireland, by likely transmission source notified to HPSC, 15/08/2021-11/09/2021

Total number of cases		N=1,670	%
Most likely transmission source			
	Close contact with a known confirmed case	700	41.9%
	Community transmission	590	35.3%
	Healthcare setting acquired: patient	63	3.8%
	Healthcare setting acquired: staff	198	11.9%
	Travel related	68	4.1%
	Under investigation	51	3.0%

Interpretation

The number of COVID-19 cases in HCWs increased between weeks 25 and 34. However, decreases have been seen in weeks 35-36. This is in line with the 4th pandemic wave and an overall decrease in the number of COVID-19 cases notified in recent weeks. The percentage of all cases who are HCWs increased slightly in weeks 33-36 to 3.8% (1,670/43,587) compared to 3.2% (1,272/39,161) in weeks 29-32. The proportion of cases who are HCWs remains far lower than that seen during the January 2021 surge when the HCW vaccination programme was in its early phase, and 11.5% (10,836/94,464) of cases were HCWs.

Nine of all reported HCWs for period of 15/08/2021-11/09/2021 were hospitalised. However, none of them were treated in ICU and no deaths were reported.

Acknowledgements

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