

2.2 Legionellosis

Summary

Number of cases in 2009: 7
Crude incidence rate: 1.7 per million

In 2009, seven cases of legionnaires' disease were notified in Ireland, a rate of 1.7 per million population. This was a significant drop compared to the rate recorded in the previous two years but the numbers are small (Table 1). Two deaths were recorded in 2009, but neither death was directly attributed to legionnaires' disease.

Three cases were notified from HSE East, two from HSE North West and one each from HSE Midlands and HSE Mid-West.

The majority of cases (57.1%) were male. The median age of cases was 63 years with a range from 50 to 85 years.

All seven cases were confirmed by urinary antigen testing. The organism involved was *Legionella pneumophila* serogroup 1.

Of the seven cases, three were travel-associated, one was hospital-associated and three were community-associated. Countries of travel included Turkey (1), United Arab Emirates (1) and Latvia (1). A case of legionnaires' disease is defined as travel-associated if the patient spent one or more nights away from home in accommodation used for commercial purposes (hotels, holiday apartments) in the 10 days before onset of illness. Travel-associated cases may involve travel within Ireland or abroad.

Pontiac fever

In 2009, there were two cases of pontiac fever reported. One case was probable and was linked to a travel-associated case of legionnaires' disease. The other case was laboratory confirmed by urinary antigen testing.

Pontiac fever is a self-limiting flu-like illness. The incubation period is 24-48 hours and patients recover spontaneously.

Table 1. Number of legionnaires' disease cases per million population notified in Ireland, 2002-2009

Age group (years)	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
<30	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
30-39	2	0	0	2	0	4	0	0
40-49	3	0	1	4	8	4	2	0
50-59	0	1	1	1	2	2	3	2
60-69	1	2	1	1	1	3	4	3
70+	0	3	1	1	2	2	2	2
Total	6	7	4	9	13	16	11	7
CIR	1.5	1.8	0.9	2.1	3.1	3.8	2.6	1.7