

6.4 Tetanus

Summary

Number of cases, 2012: 1
Number of cases, 2011: 0

One case of tetanus was notified in 2012. This is the first case notified since 2008. The case was unvaccinated, in the age group 10-14 years and the risk factor for infection was a foot wound injury from a thorn. The case was hospitalised but recovered following treatment with antibiotics and immunoglobulin.

Summary of case data since 1981:

Thirteen cases of tetanus were reported since tetanus became notifiable in November 1981. The number of tetanus cases notified by age group is shown in figure 1. Two deaths were reported, both cases were aged >60 years.

Of the 13 tetanus cases, eight (62%) were male, three (23%) were female while gender was unreported for two (15%).

The following wound injuries (n=9) were reported among the 13 notified cases: wound injuries from a

road traffic accident (n=1), wound from a fall outdoors (n=1), wound associated with dog bite (n=1), wound from kitchen knife (n=1), gardening associated leg wound (n=1), leg scratches in an avid gardener (n=1), hand wound associated with a clean piece of wood (n=1), a farming associated hand wound (n=1) and a foot wound from a thorn (n=1)

Vaccination data was reported for four of the 13 cases. Two cases were unvaccinated. One case, in the age group 15-19 years, was reported to have received three doses of tetanus vaccine as a child and a booster at four years and again at five-six years of age. One case was reported to have received a single tetanus vaccine around 40 years prior to infection.

Tetanus vaccine provides protection in 90-95% of children who are fully vaccinated. However, as protection declines over time up to 50% of 20-year-olds and up to 70% of 70-year-olds may be unprotected if they have not received boosters. The childhood immunisation schedule in Ireland recommends children receive a dose of tetanus toxoid-containing vaccine at two, four and six months of age and booster doses at four-five years and 11-14 years of age. For vaccinated persons who have received five doses of tetanus toxoid, booster doses may be considered every 10 years. This is based on concern regarding the decline of antibody

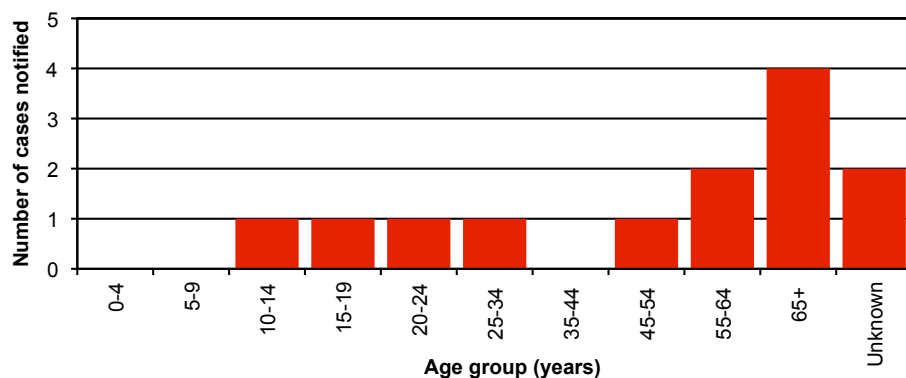


Figure 1. Tetanus cases notified (n=13) from 1982 to 2012 by age group

levels with age and potential failure of single booster doses to produce protective levels in older individuals. For more detailed information on tetanus immunisations please see the document Immunisation Guidelines for Ireland available at www.immunisation.ie.

The figures presented in this summary are based on data extracted from the Computerised Infectious Disease Reporting (CIDR) system on 25th July 2013. These figures may differ from those published previously due to ongoing updating of notification data on CIDR.