

6.4 Tetanus

Summary

Number of cases, 2013: 1

Number of cases, 2012: 1

One case of tetanus was notified in 2013. The case was in the age group 20-24 years and was classified as probable. The case was reported as having received one dose of a tetanus vaccine 20 years earlier but it was not known if the case had received any previous doses (ie primary tetanus vaccines as an infant). The risk factors for infection were reported as hand injuries from a can and a rusty nail.

Summary of case data since 1981:

Fourteen 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 14 tetanus cases, eight (57%) were male, four (29%) were female while gender was unreported for two (14%).

The following wound injuries (n=10) were reported

among the 14 notified cases: wound injuries from a road traffic accident (n=1), wound from a fall outdoors (n=1), wound associated with a dog bite (n=1), wound from a 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), a foot wound from a thorn (n=1), and hand injuries from a can and a rusty nail (n=1).

Vaccination data were reported for five of the 14 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. One case was reported as having received one dose of a tetanus vaccine 20 years earlier but it was not known if the case had received any previous doses (ie primary tetanus vaccines as an infant).

Clinical efficacy after a complete series of vaccines is almost 100%. However, immunity wanes and after 10 years may be insufficient to provide protection. The childhood immunisation schedule in Ireland recommends children receive a dose of tetanus toxoid containing vaccine at two, four and six months of age

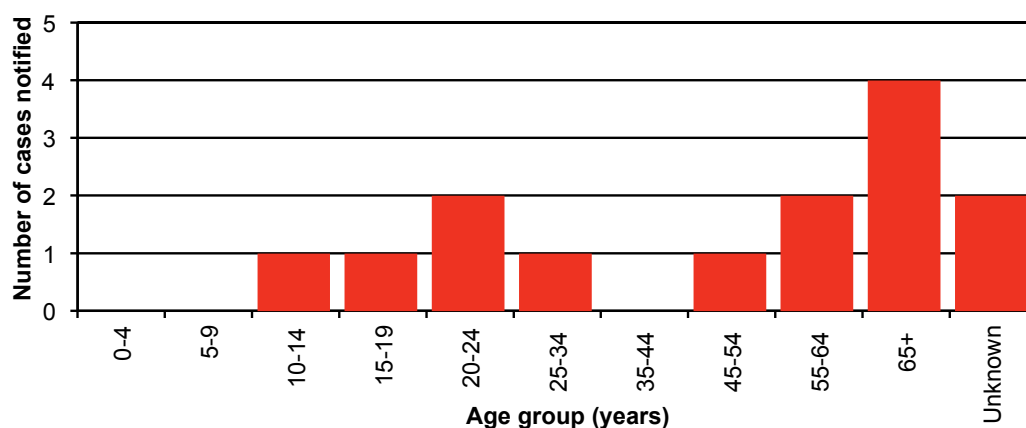


Figure 1. Tetanus cases notified (n=14) from November 1981 to 2013 by age group

and booster doses at four-five years of age 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 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 12th September 2014. These figures may differ from those published previously due to ongoing updating of notification data on CIDR.