

# 1.9 Tetanus

## Summary

Number of cases, 2007: 1

Number of cases, 2006: 0

One case of tetanus was notified in 2007. The case was aged greater than 70 years and had received a wound injury 11 days prior to onset of symptoms. A tetanus booster was given at the time of injury, however, information on previous tetanus vaccines, if any, are not known/were not reported.

In total, 10 cases of tetanus were reported since tetanus became notifiable in November 1981. Age was reported for eight of these cases, the mean age was 55.5 years and the median age was 60.5 years (range 15-84 years). The number of tetanus notifications by age group is shown in figure 1. Two deaths were reported in cases aged >60 years.

The childhood immunisation schedule recommends children receive a dose of tetanus-containing vaccine at two, four and six months of age and booster doses at four-five years and 11-14 years of age. The 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. Vaccination data were reported for three of the 10 notified cases. 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. A second case was reported to have received a tetanus vaccine around 40 years prior to infection. The third case (case notified in 2007) received a tetanus vaccine at the time of injury but information on tetanus vaccines prior to injury was not known/not reported.

The following known/suspected wound injuries (n=5) were reported among the 10 notified cases: 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) and a farming associated hand wound (n=1).

The figures presented in this summary are based on data extracted from the Computerised Infectious Disease Reporting (CIDR) system on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2008. These figures may differ slightly from those published previously due to ongoing updating of notification data on CIDR.

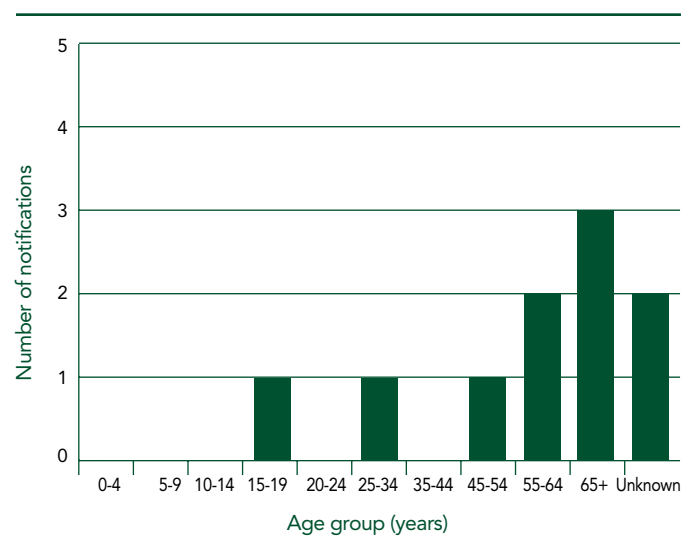


Figure 1. Tetanus notifications (n=10) from 1982 to 2007 by age group