

## 2.6 Chickenpox-hospitalised cases

### Summary

Number of cases, 2016: 106  
Crude incidence rate, 2016: 2.2/100,000

### Chickenpox-hospitalised cases

The Health Act, 1947 entitles the Minister for Health to declare by regulation diseases that are infectious, covered by legislation and that require notification to a Medical Officer of Health. The infectious diseases notifiable in Ireland are regulated in the 1981 Infectious Diseases Regulations. The amendment S.I. No. 452 of 2011 to these regulations specified for the first time the disease chickenpox, hospitalised cases only, as notifiable. Chickenpox is caused by varicella-zoster virus. The case definition is available at [www.hpsc.ie](http://www.hpsc.ie).

In 2016, 106 (2.2/100,000) hospitalised chickenpox cases were notified in Ireland compared to 69 (1.4/100,000) in 2015. In 2016, the largest number of cases was in the HSE E (table 1). Of the 106 cases, 72 (68%) were classified as confirmed, five (5%) as probable and 29 (27%) as possible. The highest age specific incidence rates were in those aged less than five years (figure 1). Of the 106 cases, 54 (51%) were female and 51 (48%) were male while sex was unreported for one case (1%).

### Chickenpox/varicella outbreaks

The amendment S.I. No. 707 of 2003 to the infectious disease regulations specified that unusual clusters or changing patterns of illness that may be of public health concern must be reported. Therefore, outbreaks of chickenpox must be notified regardless of hospitalisation status. Two outbreaks of chickenpox were notified in 2016. Both outbreaks occurred in a childcare facility with a total of 12 ill.

The figures presented in this summary are based on data extracted from the Computerised Infectious Disease Reporting (CIDR) system on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2017. These figures may differ slightly from those published previously due to ongoing updating of notification data on CIDR. The 2016 census data was used here to calculate rates.

### Acknowledgements

HPSC would like to thank all those who provided data for this report – Departments of Public Health, laboratories and clinicians.

Table 1. Number of notified hospitalised chickenpox cases and the crude incidence rate per 100,000 population (CIR) by HSE Area in 2016

HSE Area	Number	CIR
HSE E	54	3.2
HSE M	7	2.4
HSE MW	2	0.5
HSE NE	14	3.0
HSE NW	3	1.2
HSE SE	8	1.6
HSE S	13	1.9
HSE W	5	1.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>2.2</b>

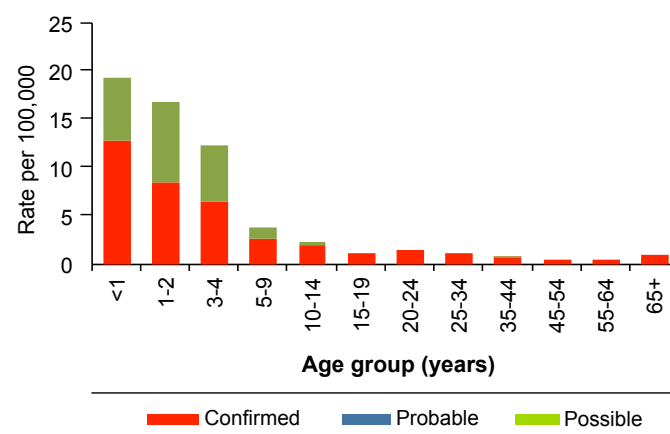


Figure 1. The age specific incidence rate (per 100,000 population) of notified hospitalised chickenpox cases in 2016 by case classification