



Annual Epidemiological Report

November 2018

Chickenpox-hospitalised cases in Ireland, 2017

Key Facts

- In 2017, 105 (2.2/100,000) hospitalised chickenpox cases were notified in Ireland.
- This is similar to 2016 when 106 cases were notified.
- Five outbreaks of suspected chickenpox/varicella were notified in 2017.
- Four outbreaks occurred in childcare facilities with a total of 66 ill and one occurred in a nursing home with three ill.

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Chickenpox-hospitalised cases

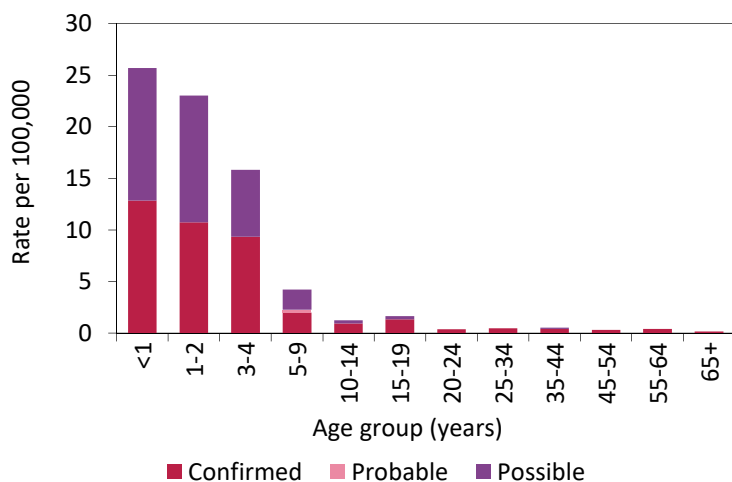
The Health Act, 1947 entitles the Minister for Health to declare by regulation diseases that are infectious, covered by legislation and that require notification to a Medical Officer of Health. The infectious diseases notifiable in Ireland are regulated in the 1981 Infectious Diseases Regulations. The 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.

In 2017, 105 (2.2/100,000) hospitalised chickenpox cases were notified in Ireland compared to 106 (2.2/100,000) in 2016 and 69 (1.4/100,000) in 2015. In 2017, the largest number of cases was in the HSE E (table 1). Of the 105 cases, 61 (58%) were classified as confirmed, one (1%) as probable and 43 (41%) as possible. The highest age specific incidence rates were in those aged less than five years (figure 1). Of the 105 cases, 52 (50%) were female and 50 (48%) were male while sex was unreported for three cases (3%).

Table 1. Number of notified hospitalised chickenpox cases and the crude incidence rate per 100,000 population (CIR) by HSE Area in 2017

HSE Area	Number	CIR
HSE E	64	3.7
HSE M	4	1.4
HSE MW	6	1.6
HSE NE	4	0.9
HSE NW	1	0.4
HSE SE	5	1.0
HSE S	19	2.8
HSE W	2	0.4
Total	105	2.2

Figure 1. The age specific incidence rate (per 100,000 population) of notified hospitalised chickenpox cases in 2017 by age group and case classification in Ireland



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/varicella must be notified regardless of hospitalisation status. Five outbreaks of suspected chickenpox/varicella were notified in 2017. Four outbreaks occurred in childcare facilities with a total of 66 ill and one occurred in a nursing home with three ill.

The figures presented in this summary are based on data extracted from the Computerised Infectious Disease Reporting (CIDR) system on 13th November 2018. 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

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