

Q Fever

Seventeen cases of Q fever were notified during 2009, seven of whom were reported to have been hospitalized (41%). This compares to 13 notifications in 2008 and 17 notifications in 2007.

Seven cases occurred in males and ten in females (table). The cases ranged in age from two to 67 years (mean age, 42 years; median age, 44 years). All cases were classified as confirmed.

The disease is commonly acquired through occupational exposure to infected sheep and other small ruminants, e.g. by farmers, veterinarians, and abattoir workers.

Over a number of years, the south of the Netherlands has been experiencing large community outbreaks of Q fever during the summer months. Some clusters have been linked with Q fever outbreaks on goat farms. Further investigations and control measures are ongoing including the introduction of mandatory vaccination of small ruminants in the region.¹

In response to the outbreak in the Netherlands, the ECDC conducted an assessment on the risk to the EU from Q fever.²

References

1. Schwimmer et al, B. 2009. Sustained intensive transmission of Q fever in the South of the Netherlands, 2009. <http://www.eurosurveillance.org/images/dynamic/EE/V14N19/art19210.pdf>
2. ECDC. 2010. Risk Assessment on Q Fever. ISBN 978-92-9193-210-8 http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/Forms/ECDC_DispForm.aspx?ID=523

Table: Q fever notifications by age and sex, Ireland 2009

Age group	Male	Female	Total
<5 yr	1	0	1
5-14 yrs	0	1	1
15-24 yrs	0	1	1
25-44 yrs	3	4	7
45-64 yrs	1	4	5
65+ yrs	2	0	2
Total	7	10	17

Echinococcosis

In 2009, there was one notification of echinococcosis in an adult. This is the third case of echinococcosis notified in Ireland since the disease became notifiable in 2004; in 2008, two adult cases were notified.

Because of the long incubation period for this disease, it is possible that infection occurred many years ago. As no enhanced information is collected on cases of this disease in Ireland, it is not possible to conjecture if their infections were acquired in Ireland or abroad.