



Annual Epidemiological Report

August 2018

Toxoplasmosis in Ireland, 2017

Key Facts

2017:

- 20 cases of toxoplasmosis were notified
- Crude incidence rate (CIR) of 0.4 per 100,000 population
- More females than males continue to be reported with a male:female ratio 0.7:1.0

Background

Toxoplasmosis is a disease caused by a common parasite called *Toxoplasma gondii*, which can infect all mammals and birds and is found throughout the world. Up to one billion of the world's human population has become infected with *Toxoplasma*. Most healthy people who become infected do not experience any symptoms, however about 10% develop a mild flu-like illness. People with living with HIV/AIDS, or taking anticancer therapy, or recent transplant recipients may be at greater risk of developing disease. Babies born to mothers who became infected with *Toxoplasma* during or just before they became pregnant are also at greater risk of severe toxoplasmosis, as the mother can pass the parasite to the child in the womb.

Methods

Toxoplasmosis is a notifiable disease in Ireland under the Infectious Disease Regulations and cases should be notified to the Medical Officer of Health. The [case definition](#) is outlined on the HPSC website.

Notifications are reported using the Computerised Infectious Disease Reporting system (CIDR) which is described [here](#).

Further information on the process of reporting notifiable infectious diseases is available [here](#).

All crude incidence rates were calculated using the 2016 Census unless otherwise specified.

Epidemiology

During 2017, 20 cases of toxoplasmosis were notified, a decrease compared to a mean number of 27 cases notified between 2012 and 2016. Among cases where patient type was reported, 64% were GP patients and 36% attended hospital outpatient services. Cases ranged in age from 15 to 61 years (median: 31.5 years). No congenital cases were reported in 2017. As in previous years, more cases were reported among females than males, (M:F ratio 0.7:1.0). This was particularly evident among females in the 25-44 year age group, which accounted for 40% of the total cases. This is most likely a reflection of enhanced testing during pregnancy.

Tables 1 and 2 summarise the number of toxoplasmosis cases reported in Ireland during 2017 by age group, sex and HSE area.

Table 1: Number of toxoplasmosis notifications in Ireland by age and sex, 2017

Age group	Toxoplasmosis			Total
	Female	Male	Sex unknown	
15-19 yrs	1	2		3
20-24 yrs	1	1		2
25-34 yrs	4	3	1	8
35-44 yrs	4			4
45-54 yrs	1			1
55-64 yrs		2		2
Total	11	8	1	20

Table 2: Number of toxoplasmosis notifications in Ireland by HSE area, 2017

HSE area	Toxoplasmosis
HSE-E	10
HSE-M	3
HSE-MW	
HSE-NE	1
HSE-NW	
HSE-SE	1
HSE-S	2
HSE-W	3
Total	20

Further information available on HPSC website

- Information on [toxoplasmosis](#)

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