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31/01/2024

Deputy Burke,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ 1805/24: To ask the Minister for Health the number of women who develop gestational diabetes during pregnancy in each of the years 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Burke,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

At present, Ireland does not have in place a national diabetes registry. With this in mind, the HSE cannot accurately report the number of people at national level presenting with various sub-types of diabetes including the number of women who develop gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM) during their pregnancy.

However, using the criteria of the International Association of Diabetes in Pregnancy Study Group (IADPSG) the estimated prevalence of GDM is 12-15% of pregnancies. Within an Irish context, this level of prevalence has been confirmed through work carried out in NUI Galway and the Atlantic DIP Study.

The prevalence of GDM amongst pregnant women varies based on the age profile and the ethnicity of the population. Another factor that influences rates of GDM is the approach to screening. The prevalence cited above is based on universal screening, i.e. all women are screened at 24-26 weeks gestation. In the majority of antenatal clinics in Ireland screening for GDM is undertaken based on the presence of certain risk factors including age, ethnicity, body mass index, family history and history of prior GDM.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,

Mary-Jo Biggs, General Manager, National Women and Infants Health Programme