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15th July, 2024

Deputy Thomas Pringle, TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

RE: PQ 28008/24

To ask the Minister for Health the current diagnostic pathway for sufferers of suspected fibromyalgia; and if he will make a statement on the matter

Dear Deputy Pringle,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in relation to the above parliamentary question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have consulted with the National Clinical Programme for Rheumatology on your question and have been informed that the following outlines the position.

Fibromyalgia is a common disorder characterised by widespread pain in the soft tissues (muscles, tendons, etc) around the joints and is commonly associated with symptoms including fatigue, brain fog, poor sleep and mood disorders.

The cause is not fully understood and there are no abnormalities found on blood tests or imaging studies to confirm a diagnosis. The diagnosis is based on clinical examination.

There is no cure for fibromyalgia and the current general systematic plan for fibromyalgia sufferers is to provide treatment to ease symptoms consists mainly of a combination of exercise or other movement therapies (e.g., physiotherapy), education, psychological support and medication.

Diagnosis and treatment can be delivered in primary care, though patients may sometimes be referred to secondary care for confirmation of diagnosis by a specialist consultant rheumatologist. Patients may also be referred to secondary care in order to access services such as physiotherapy or psychology or pain management programmes, when these are not readily available at primary care level.

I trust this information is of assistance to you, but should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

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Anne Horgan
General Manager

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