



Oifig an Stiúirthóra Náisiúnta
Géaroiríochtaí

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Deputy Michael Fitzmaurice, TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ No.22872 /24

To ask the Minister for Health the number of Guillain Barré syndrome cases in Ireland from 2018 to 2023 inclusive, in tabular form and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Fitzmaurice,

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.

Response:

Guillain Barré Syndrome (GBS) is a rare and serious immune-mediated condition affecting the peripheral nerves, typically causing weakness, sensory loss and sometimes pain in the limbs and may cause difficulties with swallowing and breathing. Symptoms come on over hours to days and typically last for several weeks. With early diagnosis and treatment most people will eventually make a full recovery, although a small proportion of those affected die from complications and some people are left with long term effects.

People with suspected GBS are usually referred to neurology services for diagnosis and treatment. Close monitoring in hospital is required and some patients will require admission to an intensive care setting until symptoms improve.

The incidence of GBS ranges from 0.89 – 1.89 cases per 100,000 and increases with increasing age. Some cases of GBS follow infection with a virus or bacteria. The number of cases is higher in males with a male to female ratio of 1.79: 1 (Sejver et al., 2011).



As there is no national database of neurological conditions, please note the information provided in Table 1 is from the Hospital Inpatient Enquiry system (HIPE) on the number of discharges per year where the principal diagnosis was Guillain Barré Syndrome. However it must be noted that this won't relate to the number of Guillain Barré Syndrome cases in Ireland, as the same patient could be admitted and discharged any number of times during the time period requested, and HIPE will be counting each discharge as opposed to each individual.

Table 1: Total discharges from acute public hospitals reported to HIPE, with a principal diagnosis of G61.0 Guillain Barré Syndrome, 2018-2023

	In-patient	Daycase	Total
2018	84	135	219
2019	72	94	166
2020	79	121	200
2021	128	114	242
2022	112	178	290
2023	151	131	282

- Reference: Sejvar JJ, Baughman AL, Wise M, Morgan OW. (2011) Population incidence of Guillain-Barré syndrome: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Neuroepidemiology*, 36:123-33

I trust this answers your question to your satisfaction.

Yours sincerely,

Emma Benton

General Manager

Acute Operations