

THOR ROI

The Health and Occupation Research network in the Republic of Ireland

Centre for Occupational and Environmental Health
The University of Manchester

<http://research.bmh.manchester.ac.uk/epidemiology/COEH/research/thor/schemes/ireland>

**Dr Sarah Daniels, Dr Ireny Iskandar, Laura Byrne & Prof Martie van Tongeren,
September 2020**

INTERIM REPORT, covering the reporting period: April 2020 to June 2020

Dear colleague,

I hope that you are keeping well in these difficult times. It is clear that the current pandemic emphasizes the importance of occupational health in terms of managing and reducing the risk of infections in the workplace, but also addressing the impact of the pandemic on health and wellbeing of the workforce due to changing patterns of work and increasing uncertainties, as well as facilitating return to work following Covid-19.

Enclosed is the latest Interim Report of THOR ROI, summarising the data that were collected from April to June 2020. It is clear that our reporting numbers dropped in the last quarter, due to the pandemic for understandable reasons. However, we hope that you find the information in this report useful and informative.

I would like to thank you for your support and encourage you to continue to report to our scheme, including on work-related COVID-19

Best wishes



Martie Van Tongeren
Professor of Occupational and Environmental Health

BACKGROUND

Chest physicians and dermatologists in the Republic of Ireland (ROI) have been reporting voluntarily to The Health and Occupation Research network (THOR-ROI) since January 2005, whilst occupational physicians have been reporting since January 2007 and general practitioners with an interest in occupational medicine have been reporting since January 2015.

This document provides a brief update of the cases reported during the inclusive period April to June 2020. This should not be viewed as a 'stand-alone' document but as a supplement to previous interim quarterly reports and 'substantive' annual reports (the most recent of which was submitted in June 2020).

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Reporters to THOR-ROI returned 10 cases and 13 nil returns.¹ The number of cases, nil returns and participating physicians for the quarter April – June 2020, compared to the same quarter in 2019, are provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Number of physicians, cases and nil returns reported by scheme April-June 2020 and April-June 2019

	April-June 2020			April-June 2019		
	Physicians	Cases	Nil returns	Physicians	Cases	Nil returns
OPRA	26	6	7	27	32	10
EPIDERM	12	1	6	13	3	5
SWORD	9	0	0	11	5	0
THOR-GP	20	3	0	20	0	1

OVERVIEW OF CASES BY SCHEME

OPRA-ROI

The 26 occupational physicians currently reporting to OPRA-ROI returned 6 case reports and 7 nil returns during the second quarter of 2020, taking the total number of cases returned by OPs since the scheme commenced in 2007 to 1910. Of the 6 cases reported to OPRA-ROI this quarter, 4 cases were males, and the age range (all cases) was 31 to 59 years (mean age = 45.8 years).

The 6 cases (7 diagnoses) reported this quarter comprised 4 musculoskeletal cases, and 2 work-related mental ill-health cases. Of the musculoskeletal cases, 1 case also comprised 1 diagnosis for 'other' work-related diseases. No respiratory, hearing loss or skin cases were reported this quarter by participating occupational physicians.

Diagnostic sub-categories:

¹ nil return = a physician tells us that they did not see any cases of work-related ill-health in their reporting month.

Below is an overview of the musculoskeletal disorders, mental ill-health cases and 'other' diseases reported this quarter by diagnostic sub-category:

- The 4 musculoskeletal disorders reported in this quarter were for the following anatomical sites: shoulder (2 diagnoses), arm and other body region specified as the skull and face.
- The 2 work-related mental ill-health cases were anxiety and posttraumatic stress disorder.
- The 'other' diagnosis was specified as epidural hematoma.

Industry and occupation:

The majority of cases were reported from the human health and social work sector (66.7%), and the reported occupations within this sector were staff nurses (2 cases), healthcare assistant (1 case) and a radiographer (1 case). The remaining 2 cases were employed in the transportation and storage sector (bus driver and train driver).

Suspected agents / precipitating events / tasks and movements:

The reported events for the 2 cases with a work-related mental ill-health diagnosis were traumatic events (1 case attributed to fatality at work), and 1 case attributed to personal characteristics and changes at work (specified as relocation).²

For the musculoskeletal disorders, the associated tasks included 2 cases attributed to an accident, 1 case attributed to guiding or holding a tool, and 1 case attributed to heavy lifting. The associated movements included 2 cases attributed to an accident and 1 case attributed to lifting. The remaining case was attributed to forceful upper grip, driving automobiles and repetitive movement.³

EPIDERM-ROI

The 12 dermatologists currently reporting to EPIDERM-ROI returned 1 case of work-related skin disease and 6 nil returns for the second quarter of 2020 (total ever cases = 523). The case was reported as female and the age was 38.

The 1 case (1 diagnosis) reported to EPIDERM-ROI this quarter was irritant contact dermatitis and the reported occupation was a nurse. The skin disease was attributed to the use of personal protective equipment (specified as a mask).⁴

SWORD-ROI

² Physicians can report up to 3 precipitating events for cases of work-related mental ill-health reported to OPRA-ROI

³ For the musculoskeletal disorders, the physicians can report up to 4 tasks and 4 movements associated with the case

⁴ Physicians can report up to 3 suspected agents for cases of skin disease reported to OPRA-ROI.

The 9 chest physicians currently reporting to EPIDERM-ROI returned 0 cases of work-related respiratory disease (bringing the total ever cases = 232).

THOR-GP-ROI

There have been 3 cases of work-related ill-health and 0 nil returns reported by the 20 general practitioners to THOR-GP-ROI this quarter (total cases ever = 38). All cases were reported as female and the age range was 30 to 50 years (mean age = 40.7 years).

The 3 cases (3 diagnoses) reported this quarter comprised 2 musculoskeletal cases, and 1 respiratory disease. No skin, hearing loss, mental ill-health or 'other' work-related ill-health cases were reported this quarter by participating occupational physicians.

Diagnostic sub-categories:

Below is an overview of the musculoskeletal disorders and the respiratory disease reported this quarter by diagnostic sub-category:

- The 2 musculoskeletal disorders were for the following anatomical sites: forearm and wrist (both related to 1 case), and shoulder.
- The respiratory case was reported as suspected COVID-19.

Industry and occupation:

The respiratory case was reported from the human health and social work sector, and the reported occupation was a healthcare practice manager. For the 2 musculoskeletal disorders, 1 case was from the manufacture of medical instruments and supplies sector, and the reported occupation was a routine operative; and 1 case was from the manufacture of pharmaceutical products sector and the reported occupation was a receptionist.

Suspected agents / precipitating events / tasks and movements:

For the respiratory case, the suspected agent was exposure to pathogens. For the 2 musculoskeletal disorders, the associated tasks included 1 case attributed to packing and sorting, and 1 case attributed to heavy lifting /carrying /pushing /pulling. The associated movements included 1 case attributed to fine hand and repetitive movement, and 1 case attributed to materials handling.

NEWS

As we move towards the end of an unusual year, we are pleased to see that reporting to THOR has increased over the summer period. We would like to continue to encourage reporters to report electronically via a web form accessed from your scheme's web page. For SWORD-ROI, EPIDERM-ROI and OPRA-ROI, the webpage is:

<http://research.bmh.manchester.ac.uk/epidemiology/COEH/research/thor/schemes/ireland>

For THOR-GP-ROI, the webpage is:

<http://research.bmh.manchester.ac.uk/epidemiology/COEH/research/thorgp/>

You will need a username (which is made up of the scheme name and your centre number) and password (which is made up of three letters, two numbers then three letters e.g. abc12def) to access the web form. Please feel free to contact us if you wish this information

to be provided again. When reporting electronically, please remember to submit a nil return if you have nothing to report for the month.

Many thanks for your continued support to THOR-ROI. Please feel free to contact us (see Table 2 for contact details) if you have any queries regarding the reporting process.

REMINDER OF HOW WE CAN HELP YOU

Please let us know if you have any questions in relation to the data presented in this quarterly report or any other related matter. In addition, we would welcome any comments or suggestions in relation to recruitment of new physicians and improvements for presenting our data. We are very keen to collaborate with anyone who is interested in using the THOR-ROI or THOR-UK data to investigate a particular area of interest. Furthermore, please let us know if you would like to present THOR-ROI or THOR-UK data at any future meetings; simply email ireny.iskandar@manchester.ac.uk.

THOR CONTACTS

Table 2 provides contact details for the THOR team. Please feel free to contact us if you have any queries.

Table 2: THOR-ROI Contact details

SCHEME	email
EPIDERM / SWORD	laura.byrne@manchester.ac.uk
OPRA / THOR-GP	susan.taylor@manchester.ac.uk
DATA REQUESTS / GENERAL ENQUIRIES	ireny.iskandar@manchester.ac.uk sarah.daniels@manchester.ac.uk