

# 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, June 2020**

**INTERIM REPORT, covering the reporting period: Jan 2020 to March 2020**

Dear colleague,

I hope you will enjoy our latest quarterly report, covering the period between January and March of this year. Over this period, reporting has probably not yet been affected by the Covid-19 outbreak, but we have seen a drop in subsequent reporting, for various and good reasons.

However, we would strongly encourage you to continue reporting cases of occupational ill-health to the THOR reporting scheme, including cases of Covid-19 who you suspect will have been infected at work.

Finally, I would like to thank you for your important contributions and continued support.

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 January to March 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 19 cases and 15 nil returns<sup>1</sup>. The number of cases, nil returns and participating physicians for the quarter January – March 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 Jan-March 2020 and Jan-March 2019**

	Jan-March 2020			Jan-March 2019		
	Physicians	Cases	Nil returns	Physicians	Cases	Nil returns
<b>OPRA</b>	26	6	8	29	20	10
<b>EPIDERM</b>	13	6	5	13	6	6
<b>SWORD</b>	9	7	0	11	1	0
<b>THOR-GP</b>	20	0	2	22	3	2

## OVERVIEW OF CASES BY SCHEME

### OPRA-ROI

The 26 occupational physicians currently reporting to OPRA-ROI returned 6 case reports and 8 nil returns during the first quarter of 2020, taking the total number of cases returned by OPs since the scheme commenced in 2007 to 1904. 16.7% of the cases reported to OPRA-ROI this quarter were males and the age range (all cases) was 37 to 53 years (mean age = 42.7 years).

The 6 cases (8 diagnoses) reported this quarter comprised 2 musculoskeletal (3 diagnoses), 2 skin diseases and 2 cases (3 diagnoses) with work-related mental ill-health problems. No respiratory, hearing loss or other work-related ill-health cases were reported this quarter by participating occupational physicians.

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

**Diagnostic sub-categories:**

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

- The 3 musculoskeletal disorders were reported this quarter under the following anatomical sites: upper limb (shoulder), lower back and hip.
- The 2 skin diseases were both reported as irritant contact dermatitis.
- The 2 mental ill-health cases (3 diagnoses) were specified as anxiety (1 diagnosis) and work-related stress (2 diagnoses).

**Industry and occupation:**

The majority of cases were reported from the health and social care sector (83.3%), and the reported occupations within this sector were care assistants (2 cases), midwives (2 cases) and a radiographer (1 case). One case was employed in the transportation and storage sector (bus 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 violence at work) and factors intrinsic to the job (1 case attributed to workload).<sup>2</sup>

For the musculoskeletal disorders, the associated tasks included 1 case attributed to an accident and 1 case attributed to materials manipulation. The associated movements included 1 case attributed to an accident and 1 case attributed to materials handling.<sup>3</sup>

The suspected agents for work-related skin disease were wet work (2 cases), gloves (2 cases) and synthetic rubber (nitrile).<sup>4</sup>

**EPIDERM-ROI**

The 13 dermatologists currently reporting to EPIDERM-ROI returned 6 cases of work-related skin disease and 5 nil returns for the first quarter of 2020 (total ever cases = 522). The majority of cases were males (66.7%); and the age ranged from 21 years to 50 years (mean age 37.5 years).

The 6 cases (7 diagnoses) reported to EPIDERM-ROI this quarter comprised 6 diagnoses of contact dermatitis and 1 diagnosis of contact urticaria. Three specified allergic contact dermatitis as the diagnosis and were reported as follows:

- a chef attributed to plants (linalool) and preservatives (Benzisothiazolinone) in cleaning agents;
- a mechanic attributed to formaldehyde, cutting oils (Bioban) and thiuram;

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

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

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

- a craft worker attributed to nickel and textile dyes.

Two cases specified irritant contact dermatitis as the diagnosis and the reported occupations comprised a hairdresser and a laboratory technician/student. Both cases were attributed to wet work.

One case specified allergic and irritant contact dermatitis and contact urticaria as the diagnoses. The reported occupation was a baker and the suspected agent was unspecified.

## **SWORD-ROI**

The 9 chest physicians currently reporting to SWORD-ROI returned 7 cases (9 diagnoses) of work-related respiratory disease (bringing the total ever cases = 232). The majority of cases were males (71.4%); and the age ranged from 45 years to 76 years (mean age 54.1 years).

The 7 cases (9 diagnoses) reported to SWORD-ROI this quarter were reported under the following categories:

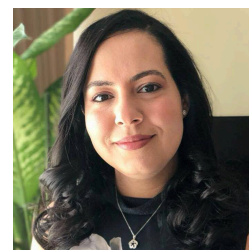
- Three cases reported as asthma. One case specified occupational asthma due to sensitisation and attributed to dust from animal feeds reported in a general operative. One case specified occupational asthma due to irritation in a chemical process operator and attributed chemical exposure including anhydrides, esters and aliphatic polyamines. One case specified occupational asthma due to irritation in a casino manager and attributed to dust, paint and other solvents.
- One case reported as non-malignant pleural disease in a construction labourer attributed to asbestos exposure.
- One case reported as lung cancer in a Garda attributed to radon exposure.
- One case reported as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease in a bricklayer attributed to dust containing cement, plaster or masonry.
- One case reported as organic dust toxic syndrome in a mushroom picker attributed to fertiliser.
- One case reported as inhalation accidents and one case reported as reactive upper airways dysfunction syndrome in a chemical process manager attributed to chemical exposure including anhydrides, esters and aliphatic polyamines.

## **THOR-GP-ROI**

There have been 0 cases of work-related ill-health and 2 nil returns reported by the 20 general practitioners to THOR-GP-ROI this quarter (total cases ever = 35).

## NEWS

**We would like to welcome Dr Ireny Iskandar who has joined the team as new THOR Research Fellow and Project Manager in May.**



## 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](mailto:ireny.iskandar@manchester.ac.uk).

We appreciate that the COVID-19 pandemic crisis might have caused interruptions which resulted in a significant reduction in your reporting of work-related ill-health cases in the past few months. However, we are very keen to continue to collaborate with you and we welcome you start reporting to us any work-related ill-health cases you have seen.

## 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**

<b>SCHEME</b>	<b>email</b>
<b>EPIDERM / SWORD</b>	<a href="mailto:laura.byrne@manchester.ac.uk">laura.byrne@manchester.ac.uk</a>
<b>OPRA / THOR-GP</b>	<a href="mailto:Susan.taylor@manchester.ac.uk">Susan.taylor@manchester.ac.uk</a>
<b>DATA REQUESTS / GENERAL ENQUIRIES</b>	<a href="mailto:ireny.iskandar@manchester.ac.uk">ireny.iskandar@manchester.ac.uk</a> <a href="mailto:sarah.daniels@manchester.ac.uk">sarah.daniels@manchester.ac.uk</a>