

# 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 Annemarie Money, Dr Ana Barradas, Dr Martin Seed & Prof Martie Van Tongeren,  
June 2019**

**INTERIM REPORT, covering the reporting period: April 2019 to June 2019**

Dear colleague,

I am pleased to enclose the latest Interim Report of THOR ROI, summarising the data that were collected from April to June 2019. We hope that you find the information in this report useful and informative.

A poster presenting the results from THOR-ROI on work-related skin disease will be presented at the Irish Association of Dermatologists conference in Sligo, 26th and 27th September by our EPIDERM-ROI champion Dr Johnny Bourke. In addition, we also hope to present results on work-related respiratory disease at the Irish Thoracic Society Annual Scientific Meeting in Galway on 22nd and 23rd November 2019.

This year we will also be celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the SWORD scheme in the UK, which was launched in 1989 by the late Professor Corbett McDonald. In celebration of this milestone we have asked Dr Jenny Hoyle (SWORD UK) to present the Lane Lecture providing an overview of the impact that the SWORD scheme has had over the years. The Lane Lecture this year will be on 5<sup>th</sup> November in Manchester, UK. If you would like to attend the Lane Lecture than please send an email to [LaneLecture@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:LaneLecture@manchester.ac.uk)

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. A scheme for occupational physicians commenced in 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 2019. 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 2019).

## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Reporters to THOR-ROI returned 35 cases and 15 nil returns<sup>1</sup>. The number of cases, nil returns and participating physicians for the quarter April – June 2019, compared to the same quarter in 2018, are provided in Table 1.

**Table 1 Number of physicians, cases and nil returns reported by scheme April-June 2019 and April-June 2018**

	April-June 2019			April-June 2018		
	Physicians	Cases	Nil returns	Physicians	Cases	Nil returns
<b>OPRA</b>	27	32	9	29	45	10
<b>EPIDERM</b>	13	3	5	13	7	6
<b>SWORD</b>	11	0	0	11	5	0
<b>THOR-GP</b>	20	0	1	22	1	2

## OVERVIEW OF CASES BY SCHEME

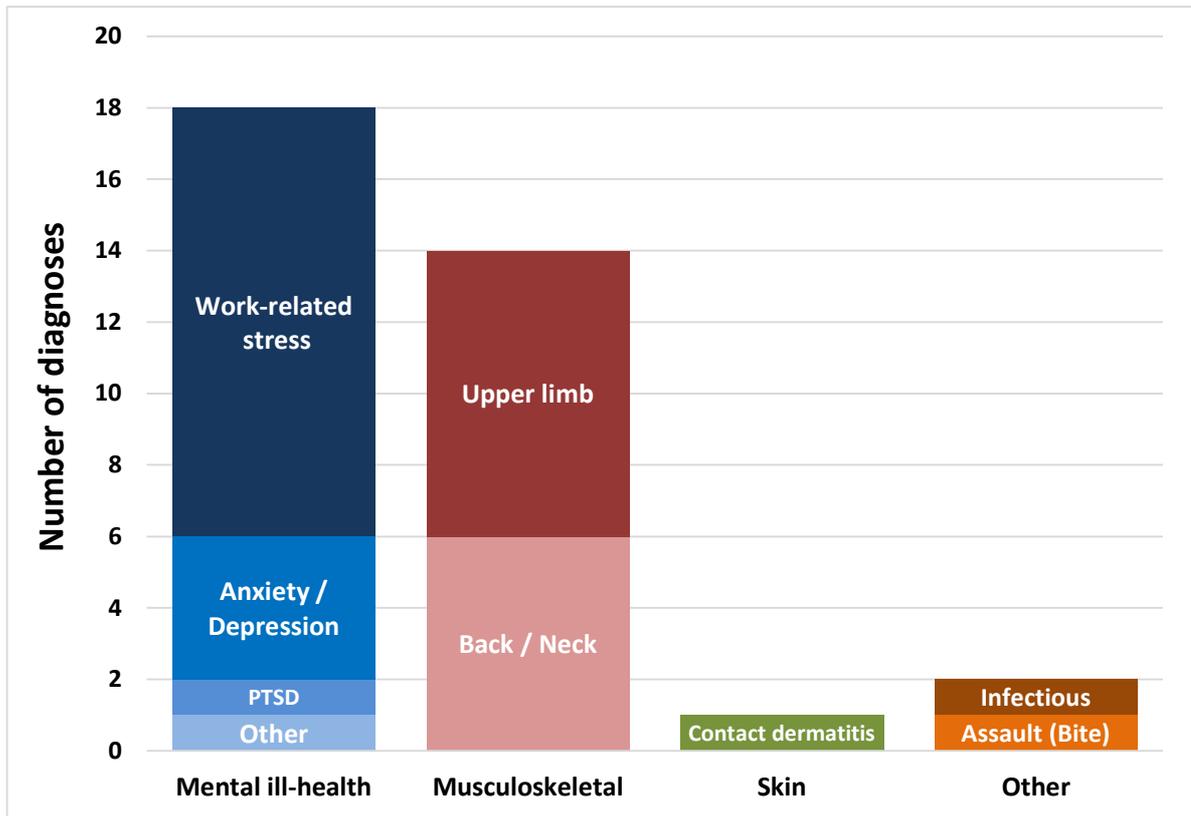
### OPRA-ROI

The 27 occupational physicians currently reporting to OPRA-ROI returned 32 case reports and 9 nil returns during the second quarter of 2019, taking the total number of cases returned by OPs since the scheme commenced in 2007 to 1870. 88% of the cases reported to OPRA-ROI this quarter were females and the age range (all cases) was 25 to 65 years (mean age = 45.3 years).

The 32 cases (35 diagnoses) reported this quarter comprised 1 skin, 13 musculoskeletal (14 diagnoses), 16 with work-related mental ill-health problems (18 diagnoses), and 2 cases of other work-related ill-health. No respiratory or hearing loss cases were reported this quarter by participating occupational physicians.

---

<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



**Figure 1 Diagnoses of work-related ill-health by main diagnostic category reported to OPRA-ROI (April-June 2019) (\*a case may be assigned more than one diagnosis).**

**Diagnostic sub-categories:**

Figure 1 provides an overview of the mental ill-health, musculoskeletal, skin and other work-related ill-health cases reported this quarter by diagnostic sub-category:

- The 16 mental ill-health cases (18 diagnoses) were specified as follows: work-related stress (12 diagnoses); anxiety and depression (4 diagnoses); post-traumatic stress disorder (1 diagnosis); other (specified as fatigue maladaptation syndrome – 1 diagnosis).
- The 13 musculoskeletal disorders (14 diagnoses) were reported under the following anatomical sites: upper limb (hand/wrist/arm/elbow/shoulder) – 8 diagnoses; and back and neck problems – 6 diagnoses.
- The skin case was specified as irritant contact dermatitis.
- ‘Other’ cases included one case of influenza A and assault (bite).

**Industry and occupation:**

All cases reported were from the health and social care sector (100%), and the most frequently reported occupations within this sector were nurses (12/32 = 38%), care assistants and auxiliaries (9/32 = 28%), and clerical officers (3/32 = 9%).

**Suspected agents / precipitating events / tasks and movements:**

The most frequently reported event for cases with a work-related mental ill-health diagnosis this quarter was unspecified work stress (6 cases), interpersonal relationships (4 cases),

organisational factors (2 cases), traumatic events (3 cases), factors intrinsic to workload (1 case) work schedule (1 case), and disciplinary action (1 case).<sup>2</sup>

For the musculoskeletal disorders the associated tasks and movements were manual handling (5 cases), accidents (4 cases), ergonomics (2 cases), lifting/carrying (1 case), and 1 unspecified case.

## **EPIDERM-ROI**

The 13 dermatologists currently reporting to EPIDERM-ROI returned 3 cases of work-related skin disease and 5 nil returns for the second quarter of 2019 (total ever cases = 506).

All cases were reported as contact dermatitis. One diagnosis was specified as allergic contact dermatitis, and the other two were specified as irritant contact dermatitis as follows:

- a female process operative in the medical device industry attributed to hand washing,
- a female farmer attributed to rubber (thiuram, carbamates),
- a male printer attributed to metal.

## **SWORD-ROI**

No cases of respiratory disease were reported to SWORD-ROI in the second quarter of 2019. Total cases ever reported = 211.

## **THOR-GP-ROI**

No cases of work-related ill-health were reported to THOR-GP-ROI in the second quarter of 2019. One nil return was submitted. Total cases ever reported = 35.

## **REMINDER OF HOW WE CAN HELP YOU**

We operate a data enquiry service for our reporting physicians, funding bodies, members of the public, research institutions and other interested parties. Table 2 provides a list of the data requests we have answered so far in 2019 from our UK colleagues. We are happy to undertake a search of our databases for any data requests you may have. Please contact the relevant member of staff (Table 3).

---

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

**Table 2 Examples of HSE and non-HSE requests answered by THOR in 2019.**

HSE	Non-HSE
Cases of skin and respiratory disease within the rail industry	Occupational dermatitis attributed to acrylates
Respiratory disease attributed to aspergillus	Vitiligo cases
Occupational Asthma attributed to spices / seasoning	Pneumoconiosis attributed to cement / concrete
Respiratory disease caused by TIG/MIG welding	Ill-health in waste recycling workers
Allergic alveolitis due to metal working fluids	Occupational asthma in plasterer technicians
Allergic contact dermatitis due to glove use or rubber accelerators in healthcare	Neurological disease in meat/animal-related industries
SWORD cases attributed to diacetyl	Sarcoidosis in dental technicians
	HAVS cases reported to OPRA

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 [Annemarie.money@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Annemarie.money@manchester.ac.uk).

## THOR CONTACTS

Table 3 provides contact details for the THOR team. Please feel free to contact us if you have any queries.

**Table 3 THOR-ROI Contact details**

SCHEME	email	phone
EPIDERM / SWORD	<a href="mailto:laura.byrne@manchester.ac.uk">laura.byrne@manchester.ac.uk</a>	+44 (0) 161 275 7103
OPRA / THOR-GP	<a href="mailto:Susan.taylor@manchester.ac.uk">Susan.taylor@manchester.ac.uk</a>	+44 (0) 161 275 5531
DATA REQUESTS / GENERAL ENQUIRIES	<a href="mailto:Annemarie.money@manchester.ac.uk">Annemarie.money@manchester.ac.uk</a> <a href="mailto:Ana.barradas@manchester.ac.uk">Ana.barradas@manchester.ac.uk</a>	+44 (0) 161 275 8492