

# THOR ROI

The Health and Occupation Research network in the Republic of Ireland

Centre for Occupational and Environmental Health  
The University of Manchester

<http://www.medicine.manchester.ac.uk/oeh/research/thor/schemes/ireland>

**Dr Annemarie Money, Dr Melanie Carder, Dr Ana Barradas & Prof Martie Van Tongeren, June 2019**

**INTERIM REPORT, covering the reporting period: Jan 2019 to March 2019**

Dear colleague,

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

We are very pleased to announce that both the Health and Safety Executive in the UK and the Health and Safety Authority in the Republic of Ireland have agreed to fund THOR data collection for another two years. During these two years we will review our current methodologies and identify innovations in terms of data collection and use of existing data to increase our knowledge on trends in occupational disease and improve our ability to identify sentinel cases. We will seek your support and input in this exercise.

This year we will also be celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the SWORD scheme, 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.

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 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 March 2019).

## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Reporters to THOR-ROI returned 30 cases and 18 nil returns<sup>1</sup>. The number of cases, nil returns and participating physicians for the quarter January – March 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 Jan-March 2019 and Jan-March 2018**

	Jan-March 2019			Jan-March 2018		
	Physicians	Cases	Nil returns	Physicians	Cases	Nil returns
<b>OPRA</b>	30	20	10	29	43	4
<b>EPIDERM</b>	13	6	6	12	7	3
<b>SWORD</b>	11	1	0	11	4	0
<b>THOR-GP</b>	22	3	2	22	0	1

## OVERVIEW OF CASES BY SCHEME

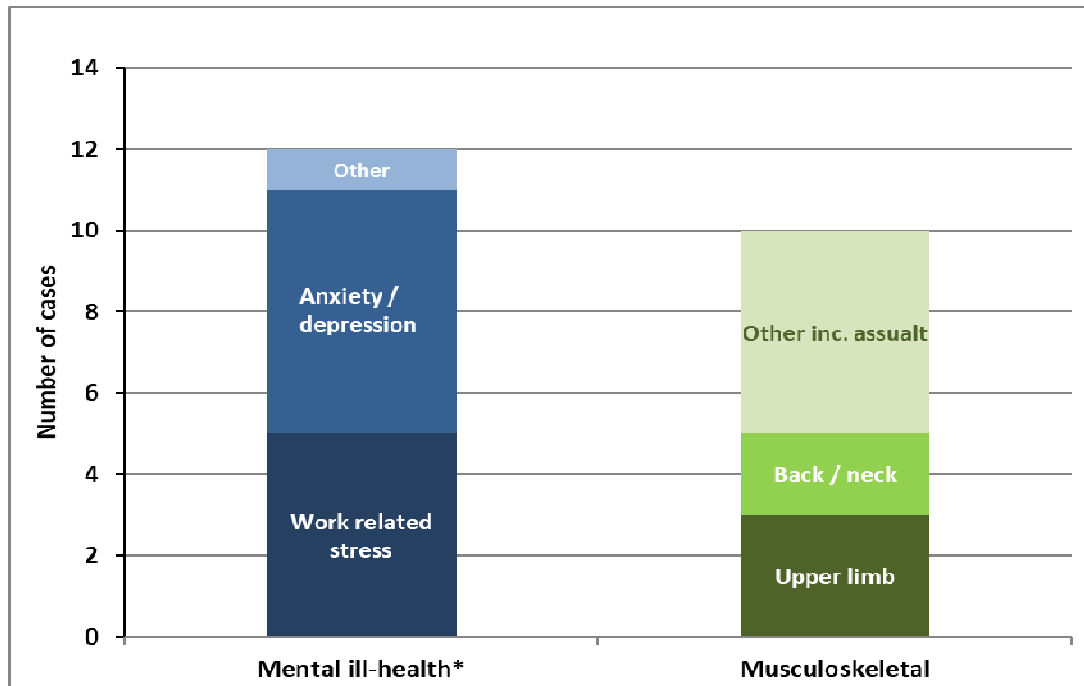
### OPRA-ROI

The 30 occupational physicians currently reporting to OPRA-ROI returned 20 case reports and 10 nil returns during the first quarter of 2019, taking the total number of cases returned by OPs since the scheme commenced in 2007 to 1838. 60% of the cases reported to OPRA-ROI this quarter were males and the age range (all cases) was 36 to 63 years (mean age = 48.5 years).

The 20 cases (22 diagnoses) reported this quarter comprised 10 musculoskeletal and 10 cases (12 diagnoses) with work-related mental ill-health problems. No skin, respiratory or other work-related ill-health 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 (Jan-March 2019) (\*a case may be assigned more than one diagnosis)**

#### **Diagnostic sub-categories:**

Figure 1 provides an overview of the musculoskeletal disorders and mental ill-health cases reported this quarter by diagnostic sub-category:

- The 10 mental ill-health cases (12 diagnoses) were specified as follows: anxiety and depression (6 diagnoses); work-related stress (5 diagnoses); other (specified as adjustment disorder – 1 diagnosis).
- The 10 musculoskeletal disorders were reported this quarter under the following anatomical sites: upper limb (hand/wrist/arm/elbow/shoulder), 'other' (including hip, face and chest wall) and back and neck problems.

#### **Industry and occupation:**

The majority of cases were reported from the health and social care sector (80%), and the most frequently reported occupations within this sector were nurses and care assistants (11/20 = 55%). A further 4 cases were employed in the transport, storage and communication sector (train driver (2); bus driver (2)).

#### **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 traumatic events which includes violence at work, assaults, traumatic experience of others at work (injury or fatality) and disciplinary action (7 cases) followed by interpersonal relationships (2 cases), organisational factors (2 cases), physical working environment (1 case) and unspecified work stress (1 case).<sup>2</sup>

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

For the musculoskeletal disorders the associated tasks were accidents (7 cases), materials manipulation (2 cases), lifting/carrying/pushing/pulling (1 case), and the associated movements were accidents (7 cases) and materials handling (3 cases).<sup>3</sup>

## **EPIDERM-ROI**

The 13 dermatologists currently reporting to EPIDERM-ROI returned 6 cases of work-related skin disease and 6 nil returns for the first quarter of 2019 (total ever cases = 503). The majority of cases were females; and the age ranged from 28 years to 47 years (mean age 38 years).

All cases were reported as contact dermatitis. Five specified allergic contact dermatitis as the diagnosis and were reported as follows:

- beauticians (2 cases) attributed to fragrances (citral, limonene) and acrylates;
- a massage therapist attributed fragrances (citral, linalool) and methylisothiazolinone;
- a hairdresser attributed to sodium metabisulphite;
- a warehouse worker attributed to rubber gloves and cement.

One irritant contact dermatitis case was reported in a mechanic attributed oils and cleaning agents.

## **SWORD-ROI**

One case of work-related respiratory disease was reported in the first quarter of 2019 (bringing the total ever cases reported to 211). The case was diagnosed as asthma and was reported in a female tiler attributed to epoxy resins.

## **THOR-GP-ROI**

There have been 3 cases of work-related ill-health and 1 nil return reported by the 22 general practitioners to THOR-GP-ROI this quarter (total cases ever = 35). All three were musculoskeletal cases and were specified as follows: wrist pain (2 cases), 1 case reported in a scientist attributed to machine operation, and 1 case reported in a barman attributed to cleaning glasses; 1 case of back pain in a retail assistant attributed to stock taking.

## **NEWS**

### **Annual Advisory Committee Meetings (AACMs)**

Dr Peter Noone attended the THOR Annual Advisory Committee meeting held here at the Centre for Occupational and Environmental Health on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> June; presentations of the 2018 ROI summary statistics were given at the meeting.

---

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

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

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