

Centre for Occupational and Environmental Health
The University of Manchester

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INTERIM REPORT, covering the reporting period: April 2021 to June 2021

Dear colleague,

Enclosed is the latest Interim Report of THOR-ROI, summarizing the data that were collected from April to June 2021. It is clear that our reporting numbers dropped in the last quarter compared to the number of cases reported in the first quarter of 2021. We are keen to increase the reporting levels again to pre-pandemic levels, and hope that you will continue to report cases of occupational ill-health to the THOR-ROI reporting schemes. If you have not been able to report to us for a while, then we hope that you will be able to start reporting again very soon. Please let us know if there is anything that we can do to improve the reporting process for you. We are keen to receive cases of COVID-19 who you suspect will have been infected at work. We are picking up some COVID-19 cases, but only a handful. Clearly, it is very difficult to establish if a patient was infected in the workplace. However, we are keen to receive COVID-19 case reports if work was likely to have played a role.

Finally, I hope that you find the information in this report useful and informative. And I would like to thank you for your continued support and important contributions to THOR-ROI.

Best wishes



Martie Van Tongeren

Professor of Occupational and Environmental Health

BACKGROUND

This document provides a brief update of the cases reported to the various THOR-ROI reporting schemes during the inclusive period of April to June 2021. 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 May 2021).

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Reporters to THOR-ROI returned 22 cases and 6 nil returns¹. The number of cases, nil returns and participating physicians for the quarter of April – June 2021, compared to the same quarter in 2020 and 2019 are provided in Table 1.

Table 1 Number of physicians, cases and nil returns reported by scheme Apr-Jun 2021, Apr-Jun 2020, and Apr-Jun 2019

	April - June 2021			April - June 2020*			April – June 2019*		
	Physicians	Cases	Nil returns	Physicians	Cases	Nil returns	Physicians	Cases	Nil returns
OPRA	27	9	4	26	6	7	27	32	10
EPIDERM	12	9	1	12	1	6	13	3	5
SWORD	9	4	0	9	1	0	11	5	0
THOR-GP	20	0	1	20	3	0	20	0	1

*Totals may have increased from previous reporting due to the submission of late cases.

OVERVIEW OF CASES BY SCHEME

OPRA-ROI

The 27 occupational physicians (OPs) currently reporting to OPRA-ROI returned 9 cases and 4 nil returns during the second quarter of 2021, taking the total number of cases returned by OPs since the scheme commenced in 2007 to 1,985. Of the 9 cases reported to OPRA-ROI this quarter, 67% were female and the age range was 26 to 62 years (mean age = 45 years).

The 9 cases (9 diagnoses) reported this quarter comprised 5 musculoskeletal disorders, 2 respiratory diseases, 1 'other' disease, and 1 skin disease. No mental-ill health or hearing loss cases were reported this quarter.

Diagnostic sub-categories:

Figure 1 provides an overview of the cases reported this quarter by diagnostic sub-category:

- 2 COVID-19 related cases were reported by the OPs this quarter. OPs can report COVID-19 cases under any category, and it is up to them to decide which category to report it under. Both cases were reported as long-COVID (symptoms reported included fatigue, brain fog, and shortness of breath) and were reported by 1 physician.
- The 5 musculoskeletal cases (5 diagnoses) were reported under the following anatomical sites: elbow (1 diagnosis); hands (1 diagnosis); leg (1 diagnosis); back (1 diagnosis); and unspecified (1 diagnosis).
- The skin disease case was specified as contact dermatitis (1 diagnosis).

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

- The remaining case reported under the 'other' category was reported as an assault at work (1 diagnosis).

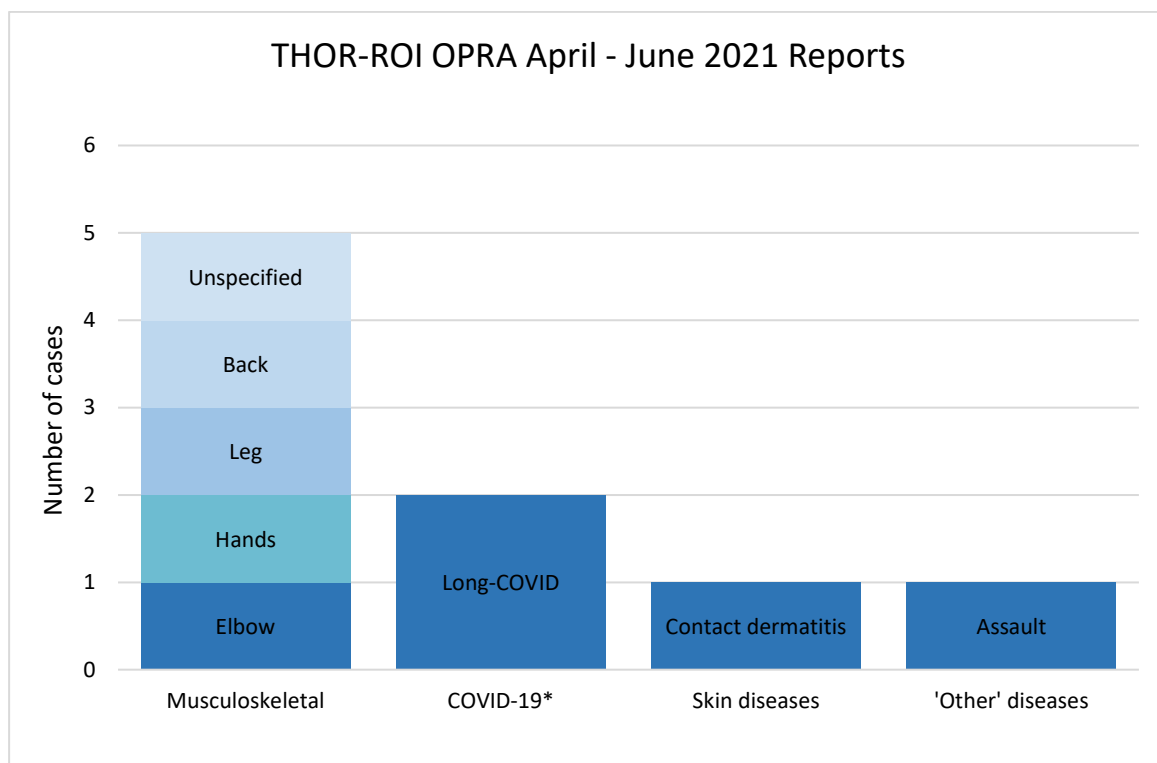


Figure 1: Number of cases of work-related ill-health reported to OPRA-ROI by diagnostic sub-category (April to June 2021)

**The reporting physician chooses which diagnosis category to report cases of COVID-19 under. In the quarter between April and June 2021, cases of COVID-19 were reported under both the respiratory and 'other' diagnostic categories.*

Industry and occupation:

Most cases were reported from the health and social care sector (89%), and the occupations reported were mainly nurses 44% (4 cases). Other occupations reported were, hospital and health service managers (2 cases), nursing auxiliaries and assistants, rail construction and maintenance operatives, and elementary office occupations (not elsewhere classified) (1 case in each category).

Suspected agents / precipitating events / tasks and movements:

The associated tasks for the musculoskeletal disorders included accidents (2 cases), keyboard work (1 case), materials manipulation (1 case), and heavy lifting/carrying/pushing/pulling (1 case). The associated movements included accidents (2 cases), repetitive motion (2 cases), lifting (1 case), materials handling (1 case), and postural not elsewhere classified (1 case).

The suspected agent for the work-related skin case was hand sanitiser (1 case).

The remaining cases were attributed to SARS-COV-2 virus (2 cases) and an assault (1 case).

EPIDERM-ROI

The 12 dermatologists currently reporting to EPIDERM-ROI returned 9 cases of work-related skin disease and 1 nil return for the second quarter of 2021 (total ever cases = 544). The majority of cases were female (67%), and the age range was from 21 to 49 years (mean age = 34 years).

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

- a shop worker attributed to hand sanitiser/gel;
- an agricultural worker attributed to lettuce;
- a nurse attributed to hand washing;
- a waitress attributed to wet work;
- a clothes designer attributed to dyes (Disperse Blue Mix 124/106).

Two cases specified allergic contact dermatitis as the diagnosis. One case was a process operator attributed to epoxy, and one case was a doctor attributed to rubber (thiuram and diphenylguanidine).

Two cases specified mixed allergic and irritant contact dermatitis as the diagnosis. One case was a trainee hairdresser attributed to hairdressing products (ammonium persulfate), plants (hydroperoxides of limonene and linalool) and preservatives (methylchloroisothiazolinone). One case was a chef attributed to plants (parthenolide and chamomilla recutita), food additives and flavourings (octyl gallate and dodecyl gallate), and benzoyl peroxide.

SWORD-ROI

The 9 chest physicians currently reporting to SWORD-ROI returned 4 cases of work-related respiratory disease in the second quarter of 2021 (total cases ever reported = 262). The majority of cases were males (75%), and the age range was from 36 to 71 years (mean age = 57).

The 4 cases (4 diagnoses) reported to SWORD-ROI this quarter were reported under the following categories:

- Mesothelioma in a manufacturing operative attributed to asbestos;
- Bronchitis/emphysema in a meat factory operative attributed to sewage exposure;
- Inhalation accident in a lecturer attributed to dye chemicals;
- Lung cancer in a ship building fitter attributed to asbestos.

THOR-GP-ROI

No cases of work-related ill-health were reported to THOR-GP-ROI in the second quarter of 2021.

NEWS

Following on from a talk from Dr Martin Seed, we have two seminars coming up in November from Dr Jérôme Lavoué and Dr Dipti Patel, registration information will be emailed out closer to the time. If you would like to catch up on any of our previous seminars you can do so by logging into the THOR website as described below. The recordings will be available here to watch for the foreseeable future.

The annual Lane Lecture will take place on Tuesday 30th November 2021 at 4pm. Dr Lesley Rushton, who chairs the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council in the UK, will present “Long-COVID: should this be in the occupational disease fast lane?”. You will be able to attend the Lane Lecture virtually via Zoom or follow live on YouTube. If you wish to attend the Lane Lecture, please register your interest [here](#).

We would like to continue to strongly encourage reporters to report electronically via a web form. To access the web form please click the link for your relevant scheme:

[SWORD-ROI](#)

[EPIDERM-ROI](#)

[OPRA-ROI](#)

[THOR-GP-ROI](#)

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.

Please follow us to keep up to date with the latest news from the network. Our dedicated THOR Twitter is [@THOR_UoM](#), alternatively you can follow us on the Centre for Occupational and Environmental Health Twitter; [@UoM_COEH](#).

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-ROI / SWORD-ROI	laura.byrne@manchester.ac.uk
OPRA-ROI / THOR-GP-ROI	susan.taylor@manchester.ac.uk
DATA REQUESTS / GENERAL ENQUIRIES	ireny.iskandar@manchester.ac.uk sarah.daniels@manchester.ac.uk kim.fowler@manchester.ac.uk