

3.4 Hepatitis A

Summary

Number of cases, 2010: 46
 Crude notification rate, 2010: 1.1/100,000
 Number of cases, 2009: 50

The incidence of hepatitis A in Ireland has been low in recent years and remained low in 2010, with 46 cases notified. This corresponds to a crude notification rate of 1.1/100,000 population and is similar to 2009 when 50 cases were notified (figure 1). Case classification was reported for all cases. Forty cases were laboratory confirmed, three cases were classified as probable and three as possible.

Hepatitis A virus causes an acute, usually self-limiting disease of the liver. It is primarily transmitted from person to person via the faecal-oral route and is associated with poor hygiene and sanitation. Common source outbreaks due to contaminated food or water also occur.

Fifty two percent of cases were male (n=24) and 48% were female (n=22). All age groups were affected but the highest notification rates were in children, teenagers and young adults (figure 2).

Fourteen cases were linked to travel outside of Ireland

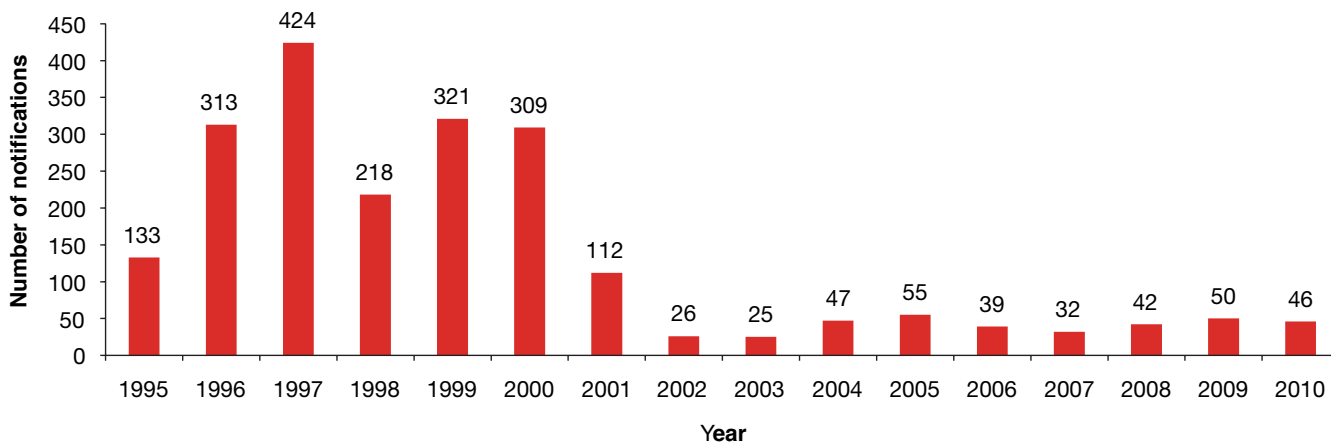


Figure 1. Number of hepatitis A notifications, 1995-2010

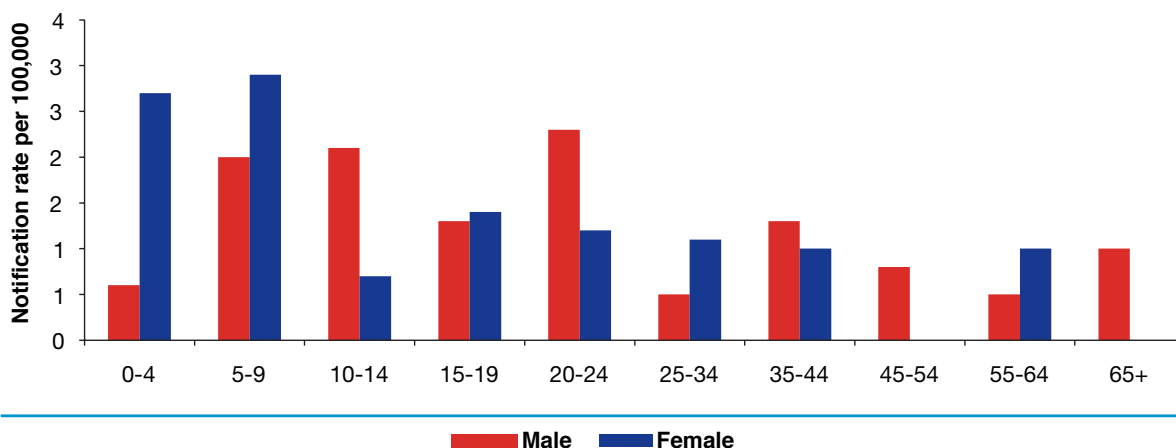


Figure 2. Age and sex-specific notification rates/100,000 population for hepatitis A, 2010

and a further four cases had a history of recent travel outside of Ireland but could also have been infected in Ireland. Twenty two cases were infected in Ireland, but ten of these were contacts of an index case infected outside of Ireland. Country of infection was not known for the remaining six cases.

Three hepatitis A outbreaks were reported in 2010 and one case notified in 2010 was associated with a 2009 outbreak. The 2009 outbreak involved 18 people and was associated with an index case who had travelled to India. The largest of the 2010 outbreaks was in the HSE-S and involved 7 adults and 4 children. The index case was a child adopted from an endemic country and most of the other cases were family or extended-family members. The other two outbreaks were in the HSE-E. One involved two children and one adult and the other involved two young adults. All were infected in Ireland.

The figures presented in this summary are based on data extracted from the Computerised Infectious Disease Reporting (CIDR) System on 13th October 2011. These figures may differ from those published previously due to ongoing updating of notification data on CIDR.