

3.4 Hepatitis A

Summary

Number of cases, 2015: 36
 Crude notification rate, 2015: 0.8/100,000 population
 Number of cases, 2014: 21

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.

The incidence of hepatitis A in Ireland has been low in recent years and remained low in 2015, with 36 cases notified (0.8/100,000 population) (figure 1). Although this was an increase compared to 2014 (n=21, 0.5/100,000 population), the number of cases of hepatitis A fluctuates from year to year. The average number of cases notified annually over the past ten years was 38 (median: 39). Case classification was reported for all cases and thirty four (94%) were laboratory confirmed. The notification rate in each HSE area is shown in figure 2.

Fifty six percent (n=20) of cases were male and 44% (n=16) were female. The highest notifications rates were in children

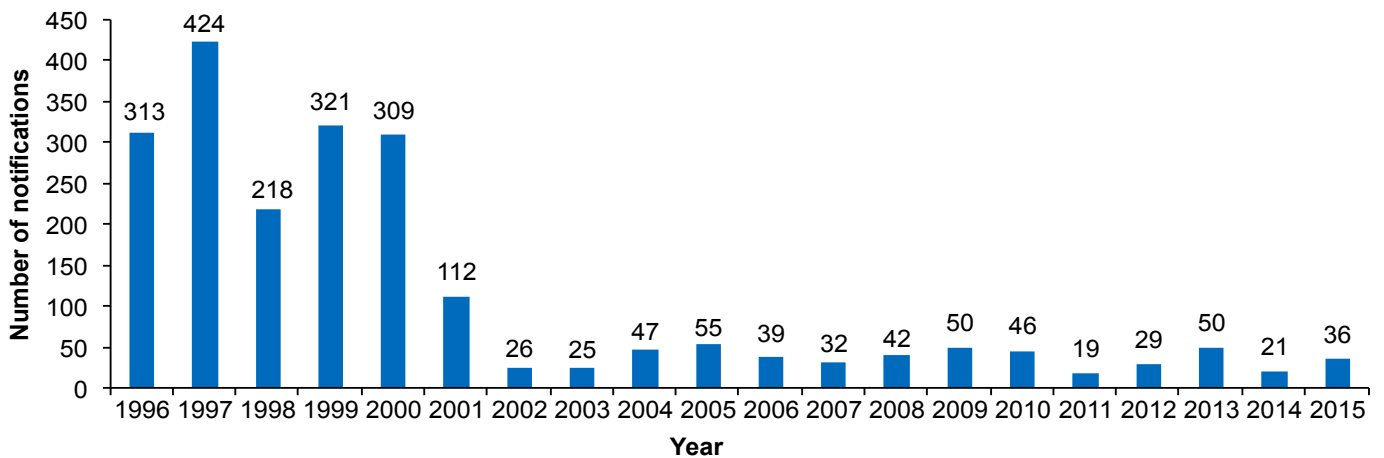


Figure 1. Number of hepatitis A notifications, 1996-2015

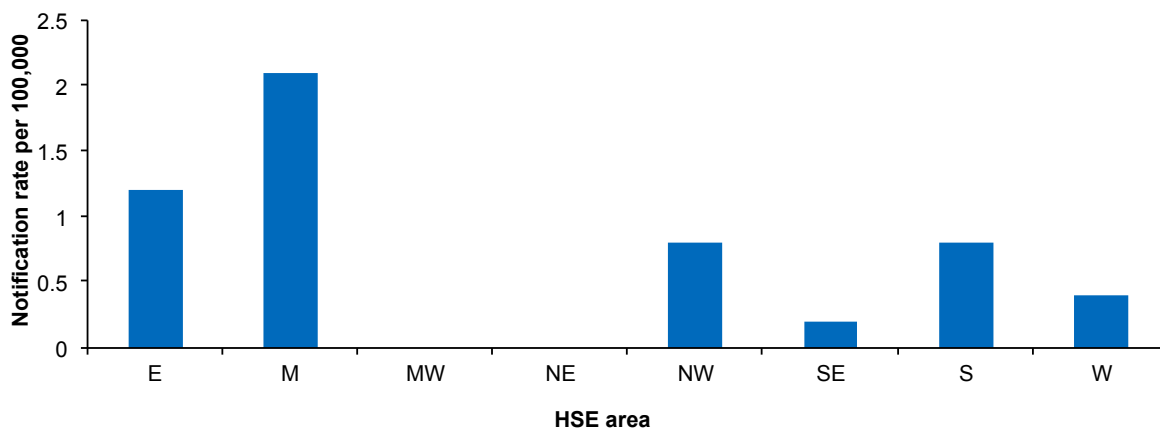


Figure 2. Notification rate for hepatitis A by HSE area, 2015

and young adults, with 61% (n=22) of cases aged between 0 and 24 years (figure 3). Almost half of the 2015 cases (n=17) were notified in April and May, but a large proportion of these were part of a single outbreak.

Overall, thirteen cases were linked to travel outside of Ireland. Nineteen cases were reported as infected in Ireland, but three of these were part of an outbreak where the index case was infected outside Ireland. Country of infection was not known for the remaining four cases.

Three hepatitis A outbreaks were reported in 2015. The largest involved 7 adults and 4 children and was an extended family and local community outbreak linked to a crèche in the HSE-E. In an outbreak in the HSE-M, involving 4 children, the index case had travelled to Pakistan and the remaining cases were infected through person-to-person contact in Ireland. The remaining outbreak involved two children in the HSE-E and was linked to travel to Sudan.

The figures presented in this summary are based on data extracted from the Computerised Infectious Disease Reporting (CIDR) System on 21st September 2016. These figures may differ from those published previously due to ongoing updating of notification data on CIDR.

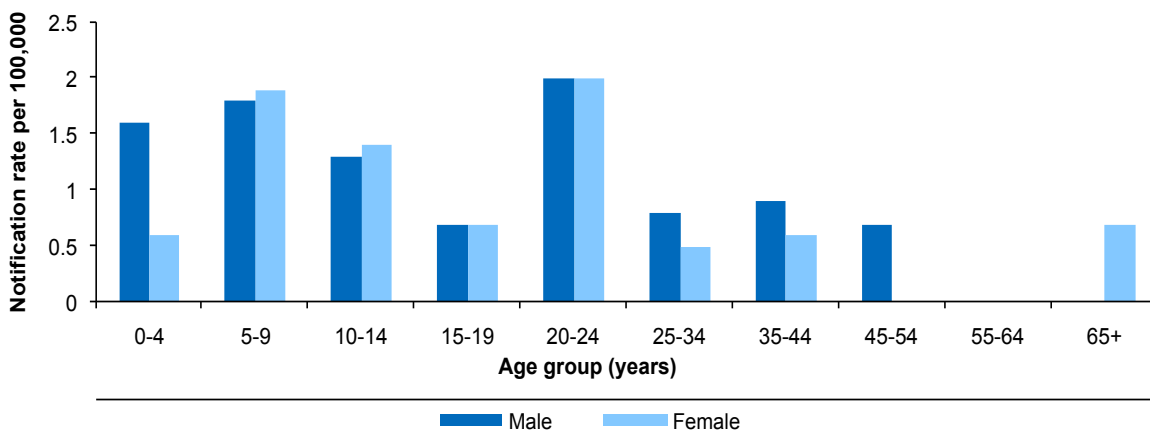


Figure 3. Hepatitis A age and sex-specific notification rates/100,000 population, 2015