

Tetanus

Summary

Number of cases, 2014: 1

Number of cases, 2013: 1

One case of non-fatal tetanus was notified in 2014. The case was in the age group 15-19 years and was classified as probable based on clinical presentation. The case was incompletely vaccinated and had received one dose of a tetanus vaccine as an infant and another dose at two years of age. The case reported having a discharging wound on a toe one week prior to onset of tetanus symptoms developing. The cause of the wound was not reported.

Summary of case data since 1981:

Fifteen cases of tetanus were reported since tetanus became notifiable in November 1981. The number of tetanus cases notified by age group is shown in figure 1. Two deaths were reported, both cases were aged >60 years.

Of the 15 tetanus cases, eight (53%) were male, five (33%) were female while gender was unreported for two (13%).

The following wound injuries (n=10) were reported among the 15 notified cases: wound injuries from a road traffic accident (n=1), wound from a fall outdoors (n=1), wound associated with a dog bite (n=1), wound from a kitchen knife (n=1), gardening associated leg wound (n=1), leg scratches in an avid gardener (n=1), hand wound associated with a clean piece of wood (n=1), a farming associated hand wound (n=1), a foot wound from a thorn (n=1) and hand injuries from a can and a rusty nail (n=1). In the case reported in 2014 the details of the wound injury on the toe were not reported.

Vaccination data were reported for six of the 15 cases. Two cases were unvaccinated. One case, in the age group 15-19 years, was reported to have received three doses of tetanus vaccine as a child and a booster at four years and again at five-six years of age. One case was reported to have received a single tetanus vaccine around 40 years prior to infection. One case was reported as having received one dose of a tetanus vaccine 20 years earlier but it was not known if the case had received any previous doses (i.e. primary tetanus vaccines as an infant). One case (in 2014) was reported as having received one dose of a tetanus vaccine as an infant and a dose when they were 2 years of age.

Vaccine efficacy after a complete series of vaccines (five doses) is almost 100%. However, immunity wanes and after 10 years may be insufficient to provide protection. The childhood immunisation schedule in Ireland recommends children receive a dose of tetanus toxoid containing vaccine at two, four and six months of age and booster doses at four-five years of age and 11-14 years of age. For vaccinated persons who have received five doses of tetanus toxoid, booster doses may be

considered every 10 years. This is based on concern regarding the decline of antibody levels with age and potential failure of single booster doses to produce protective levels in older individuals. For more complete and detailed information on recommended tetanus immunisations please see the HSE National Immunisation Office website at <http://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/>.

The figures presented in this summary are based on data extracted from the Computerised Infectious Disease Reporting (CIDR) system on 12th August 2015. These figures may differ from those published previously due to ongoing updating of notification data on CIDR.

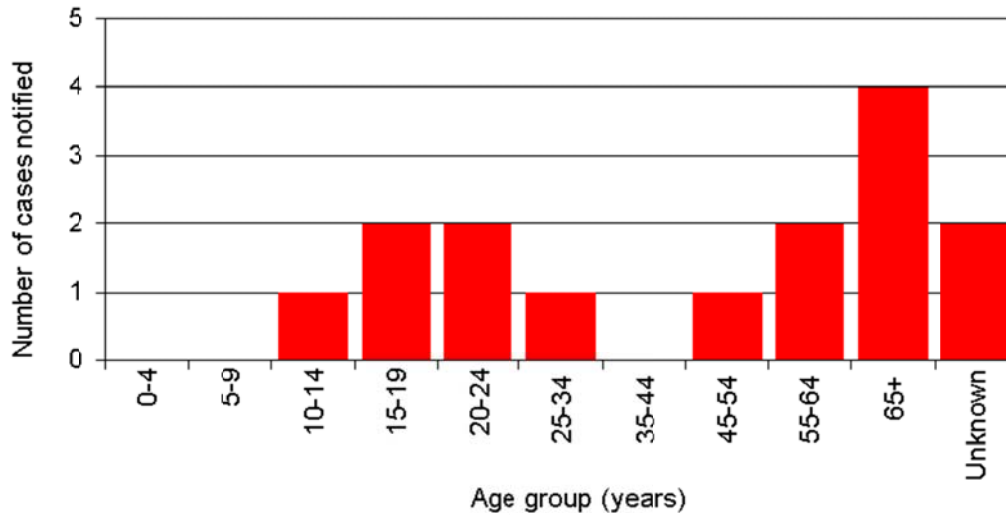


Figure 1. Tetanus cases notified (n=15) from November 1981 to 2014 by age group