



Annual Epidemiological Report

October 2019

Toxoplasmosis in Ireland, 2018

Key Facts

2018:

- 32 cases of toxoplasmosis were notified
- Crude incidence rate (CIR) of 0.7 per 100,000 population
- More females than males continue to be reported with a male:female ratio 0.4:1.0

Background

Toxoplasmosis is a disease caused by a common parasite called *Toxoplasma gondii*, which can infect all mammals and birds and is found throughout the world. Up to one billion of the world's human population has become infected with *Toxoplasma*. Most healthy people who become infected do not experience any symptoms, however about 10% develop a mild flu-like illness. People with living with HIV/AIDS or taking immunosuppressive therapy may be at greater risk of developing disease. Babies born to mothers who were infected with *Toxoplasma* during or just before pregnancy are also at greater risk of severe toxoplasmosis, as the mother can pass the parasite to the child in the womb.

Methods

Toxoplasmosis is a notifiable disease in Ireland under the Infectious Disease Regulations and cases should be notified to the Medical Officer of Health. The [case definition](#) is outlined on the HPSC website.

Notifications are reported using the Computerised Infectious Disease Reporting system ([CIDR](#)) which is described [here](#).

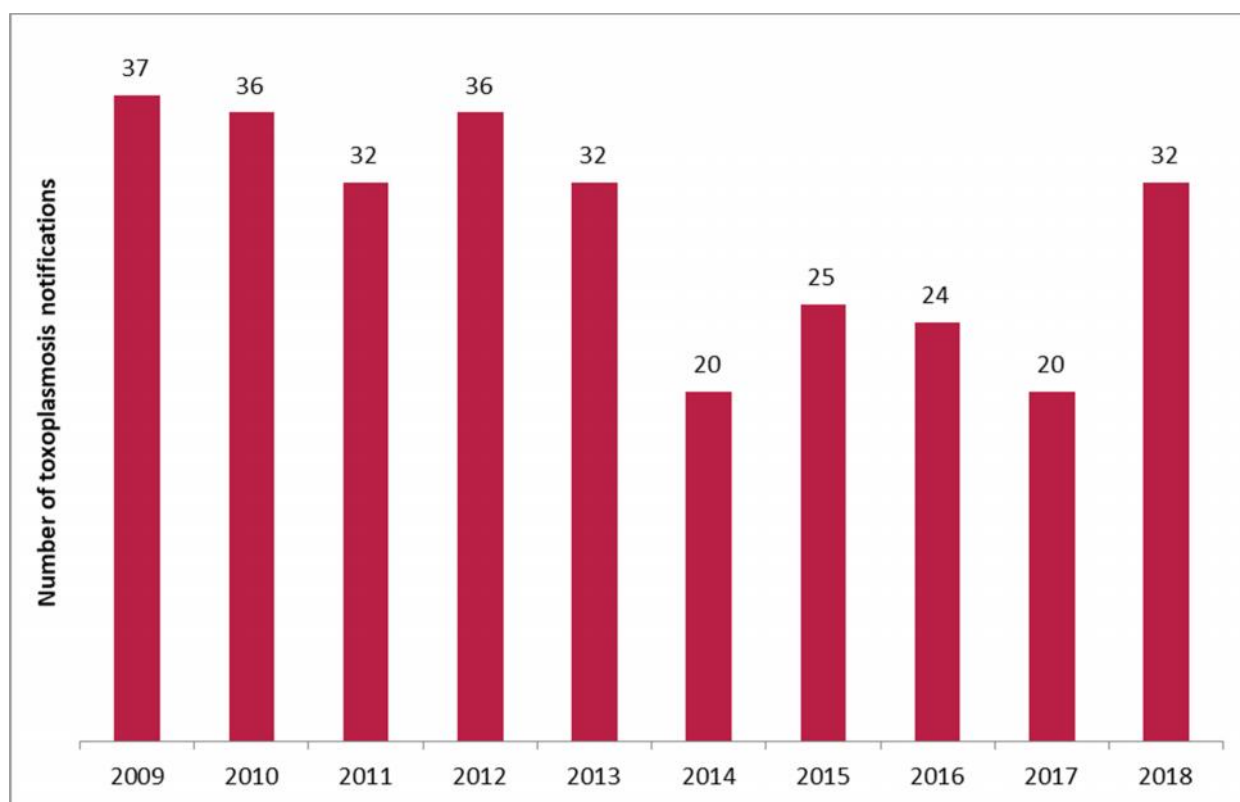
Further information on the process of reporting notifiable infectious diseases is available [here](#).

All crude incidence rates were calculated using the 2016 Census unless otherwise specified.

Epidemiology

During 2018, 32 cases of toxoplasmosis were notified, an increase compared to a mean number of 24 cases notified between 2013 and 2017 (Figure 1). Among the 27 cases where patient type was reported, 56% were GP patients and 26% attended hospital outpatient services. Cases ranged in age from nine to 86 years (median: 34.5 years). No congenital cases were reported in 2018. As in previous years, more cases were reported among females than males, (M:F ratio 0.4:1.0). This was particularly evident among females in the 25-44 year age group, which accounted for over half of the total cases. This is most likely a reflection of increased testing during pregnancy.

Tables 1 and 2 summarise the number of toxoplasmosis cases reported in Ireland during 2018 by age group, sex and HSE area.

Figure 1: Annual number of toxoplasmosis notifications, Ireland**Table 1: Number of toxoplasmosis notifications in Ireland by age and sex, 2018**

Age group	Toxoplasmosis		Total
	Female	Male	
5-9 yrs	1		1
10-14 yrs		1	1
15-19 yrs	2		2
20-24 yrs	1	1	2
25-34 yrs	7	3	10
35-44 yrs	6	1	7
45-54 yrs	2	1	3
55-64 yrs	2	1	3
65+ yrs	2	1	3
Total	23	9	32

Table 2: Number of toxoplasmosis notifications in Ireland by HSE area, 2018

HSE area	Toxoplasmosis
HSE-E	10
HSE-M	4
HSE-MW	4
HSE-NE	0
HSE-NW	2
HSE-SE	3
HSE-S	6
HSE-W	3
Total	32

Further information available on HPSC website

- Information on [toxoplasmosis](#)

Acknowledgements

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