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21/12/2020

Deputy O'Reilly
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ ref 41706/20: To ask the Minister for Health when the translabial scanner which has been procured by the HSE will be available for use to help identify women who have been fitted with a transvaginal mesh device; the reason this service is still not operational three years after the issue of mesh implants was first raised in Dáil Éireann

PQ 42438/20: To ask the Minister for Health the reason a translabial scanner is not in place and operational to help identify those who have been implanted with a mesh device

Dear Deputy O'Reilly,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

As part of the development and deployment of a National Mesh Complication Service in Ireland, two translabial scanners were procured for the national service, one located in the National Maternity Hospital, Holles Street and one in Cork University Maternity Hospital. These machines arrived in both centres in December 2019.

As these scanners had not be previously used in our acute services, specific training was required by our Irish medical specialists on their use. This training in the use of translabial scanners specifically in the context of managing mesh arising from mesh surgery was scheduled to take place earlier this year. An overseas specialist in this area from the UK had been secured and was due to attend the Dublin site to provide hands on training to specialists based both in NMH and CUMH.

Unfortunately this training had to be cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In current circumstance, and with a view to safeguarding the safety of both Irish staff and the overseas trainer, it has not been possible to date to reschedule this training due to the risks associated with travel and the need for restricting one's movements on foot of international travel. This issue is being kept under active review, with possible alternatives for training being explored, as all parties are keen that this training would proceed as and when it is safe to do so.

As the scanners have other functionality, besides translabial scanning, they are being utilised by the relevant gynaecology services. Additionally, it is important to note that routine diagnostics used by clinicians for the detection of mesh implants e.g. CT and MRI scanning remain available and in use across the two sites.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,



Mary-Jo Biggs, General Manager, National Women and Infants Health Programme