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6th May 2021

Re. **PQ 18887/21**: To ask the Minister for Health the number of patients currently waiting on surgery for cancer by three month intervals of time on the waiting list in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

PQ 18888/21: To ask the Minister for Health the number of cancer operations of the breast, prostate, colon, rectal, lung, ovarian and oesophageal that took place in each year since 2016, in tabular form; the percentage of these that took place within NCCP target surgery timeframes; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Ó Cuív

The National Cancer Control Programme has been requested to reply directly to you in relation to the above PQs

PQ 18887/21

The National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) does not routinely collect data on scheduling (waiting lists) and as such the numbers of patients currently waiting for surgical treatment would be data that only the hospitals themselves can comment on.

The National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF) do collect routine data on treatment waiting lists which is publicly available at https://www.ntpf.ie/home/inpatient_group.htm

However, this data is for all patients awaiting treatment and does not include any indication as to whether the procedure is related to a cancer diagnosis. Consequently, there is no facility for NCCP to specifically report on cancer patients awaiting surgical treatment.

Please note the following which was taken from the above link:

The National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF) is responsible for the collection, collation and validation of Inpatient, Day Case and Outpatient waiting lists.

The IPDC Waiting List report shows the total number of patients waiting, across the various time bands, for Inpatient and Day case treatment in each Specialty (these numbers do not include GI Endoscopies, see separate report). Each report lists the numbers waiting per Hospital in each particular specialty. To preserve confidentiality, where there are <5 patients waiting in a particular specialty/hospital, we have aggregated the numbers under a 'Small Volume' heading.

Each report is aggregated data on a monthly basis over a year. The current year's report will be appended to each month.

Adult/Child classification: From 1/1/2015 this is based on each hospital's designation, for example all Children's Hospitals will have all patients set as Child, all Adult-only hospitals have all patients set as Adult and all mixed Adult/Child hospitals have the patients designated based on age (0-15 = Child). Prior to 1/1/2015 each hospital managed their own adult/child classification ages.

Please note that NTPF does not collect activity data i.e. numbers treated or removed. We collect a snapshot of the number of patients waiting in each hospital and publish the numbers monthly on our website.

Boards and management of individual public hospitals are responsible for the accuracy and the integrity of patient data submitted to NTPF.

Work on the quality of this data is ongoing between NTPF and individual hospitals and technical and administrative issues will be addressed as they arise.

PQ 18888/21

The NCCP collect limited retrospective data on surgical timeframes for breast, lung and prostate cancers.

Current data is tabulated as follows:

Cancer	Surgical Timeframe	Year	Total	Within Timeframe
Breast	Within 20 Working Days	2016	1,312	85.6%
Breast	Within 20 Working Days	2017	1,392	87.2%
Breast	Within 20 Working Days	2018	1,363	81.5%
Breast	Within 20 Working Days	2019	1,347	83.0%
Lung	Within 30 Working Days	2016	550	63.3%
Lung	Within 30 Working Days	2017	480	68.5%
Lung	Within 30 Working Days	2018	498	65.1%
Lung	Within 30 Working Days	2019	499	56.9%
Prostate	Within 30 Working Days	2016	280	45.4%
Prostate	Within 30 Working Days	2017	336	30.4%
Prostate	Within 30 Working Days	2018	368	32.1%
Prostate	Within 30 Working Days	2019	440	31.1%

Please note that surgical data on 2020 activity is incomplete and has not yet been finalised and until such time it will not be available for public comment.

All KPIs are based on internationally benchmarked clinical standards and are designed with the national lead clinicians specific to each tumour site.

Caveats:

Breast surgery reported is specifically for the number of patients with primary invasive or in situ tumours who had any of the following surgical interventions as their first treatment

- 31500-00 – excision of lesion of breast (diagnostic or therapeutic)
- 31524-00 – subcutaneous mastectomy, unilateral
- 31524-01 – subcutaneous mastectomy, bilateral
- 31518-00 – simple mastectomy, unilateral
- 31518-01 – simple mastectomy, bilateral
- 30335-00 – upfront sentinel node biopsy

and were operated on within 20 working days of the date of the MDM when a B5 or C5 was first identified.

Lung surgery reported is specifically for the number of patients diagnosed with lung cancer who undergo a lung resection and are offered a date for surgery (where surgery is the first treatment) within 30 working days of the decision to operate by the multidisciplinary team.

Prostate surgery reported is specifically for the number of patients diagnosed with a primary prostate cancer whose first intervention is surgery and who undergo surgery in the cancer centre within 30 working days of the date placed on the waiting list for surgery.

During waves 1-3 of the Covid-19 Pandemic the national designated cancer centres continued to provide urgent/complex/time critical surgeries in line with National Clinical Guidance during Covid-19. Most cancer centres maintained surgery as per Government and NPHE advice, if the hospitals had access to surgical theatre, ICU/HDU capacity. Alternatively, the Private Hospital Contract was utilised in collaboration with the Hospital Group clinical and Senior Management teams.

Yours sincerely



Professor Risteárd Ó Laoide
National Director
National Cancer Control Programme