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25th March 2021

Deputy McNamara,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Dublin 2

PQ Ref 13514/21: To ask the Minister for Health if there is an explanation for the extraordinarily high incidence of Covid placentitis of which there were eleven cases reported worldwide up to November 2020 and four suspected cases in Ireland announced on 4 March 2021; and if he will provide any such explanation.

Dear Deputy McNamara,

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.

The four cases in Ireland are preliminary observations in advance of a final determination by the Coroner's Court. The eleven cases alluded to are cases reported in the medical literature from other jurisdictions.

There is no way of knowing how many cases are at a preliminary stage of investigation in other countries, thus the direct comparison of the four Irish cases which are preliminary observations versus the eleven international cases reported to date in the medical literature is not comparing equivalent data per se.

However notwithstanding that, the four reported stillbirths have been responded to by The Institute of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, The Faculty of Pathology and NWIHP, with guidance being issued by all parties in relation to this matter.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours sincerely,

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