

16th April 2021

Deputy Cullinane,
Leinster House
Dublin 2

PQ Ref 17395/21 To ask the Minister for Health the number of qualified surgeons with the competency to perform full and safe removal of mesh implants; the hospitals they are attached to; the types of mesh implants they can remove; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Cullinane,

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 National Women and Infants Health Programme in 2020 funded a multi-disciplinary national mesh complications service across 2 centers (the CUMH and Holles Street) to provide expert specialist care to women requiring mesh removal. This service works in a multidisciplinary fashion with a range of medical specialties involved as required including Uro-Gynaecology, Urology and Colorectal.

The two hospitals providing this national mesh complication service have always treated post mesh complications including full mesh removals, however with this additional investment these centres are now positioned to have clear dedicated multidisciplinary treatment pathways for women with post mesh complications. All cases of complications will be dealt with appropriately according to the individual needs of each patient. The appropriate combination of specialists will be involved in the assessment and management of each patient, including during surgery as required. Patients will also be supported along their journey with the input of specialist physiotherapists, pain specialists, clinical nurse specialists and psychological counselling as required.

The Consultants involved in the care of mesh complications work as part of an MDT and all the Consultants involved in the Centers of Excellence have undergone at least 10 years of specialist training followed by subspecialist training, mostly abroad in the UK, US and Australia. Additionally for the past 6 years, an internationally renowned subspecialist training programme in urogynaecology has been established in Ireland with this programme attracting specialists from all over the world with the current trainee travelling from Switzerland and the next trainee coming from Israel.

The CMOs report *The Use Of Uro-Gynaecological Mesh In Surgical Procedures* at recommendation 9 states: “The HSE should establish and maintain a list or registry of persons qualified to undertake SUI and/or POP mesh surgery procedures in HSE funded hospitals on foot of clear guidance from the relevant professional bodies, the IOG and the RCSI, re the sub-specialist training and ongoing competence requirements for surgeons undertaking these surgeries.” Going forward all mesh surgeries, both primary and tertiary will have to go through an MDT with all MDTs registered with the National Mesh Oversight Group. This will mean that all Consultants who chose to carry out this type of surgery, both primary and tertiary, will be registered with the National Mesh Oversight Group as a member of an MDT.

I trust this clarifies the matter.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary-Jo Biggs', written in a cursive style.

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