



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

5th November 2021

Deputy Bernard J. Durkan
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Dublin 2.

Rannan na nOspideil Ghearmhíochaine
Aonad 4A – Áras Dargan
An Ceantar Theas
An Bothar Mileata
Cill Mhaighneann
BÁC 8

Acute Operations
Health Service Executive
Unit 4A - The Dargan Building
Heuston South Quarter
Military Road
Kilmainham
Dublin 8.

PQ 52854/21* *To ask the Minister for Health the number of hospital procedures which were suspended over the past three years to date due to lack of appropriate theatre space.*

Dear Deputy Durkan,

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.

Response

The HSE does not have validated data on all aspects of your enquiry however available relevant information relating to theatre numbers and closures is provided and the definitions used in capturing theatre utilisation data. Please note that all attached information is issued as un-validated, as auditing resources are not available at this time. As you will appreciate, operating theatres fluctuate in response to changing demand and factors such as refurbishment, infection control measures, staffing shortages and the impact of COVID also have an impact on theatre availability; however, data supplied overleaf refers to the week ending the 17th October 2021

Theatre Utilisation

The information below relates to the week ending the 17th October 2021. This data is compiled on a **test basis only**, full validation/ audit has not been carried out and there are not related KPIs in HSE NSP for 2019. The purpose of collecting data regarding theatre utilisation has been to ascertain theatre funded capacity and assess how many scheduled theatre sessions (half day/ night) are unused due to various issues. The collection template used is based on the following definitions/ assumptions

- Information is required in relation to operating theatres (including staffed emergency theatres), minor operations and procedure rooms which are currently operational.
- Details of rooms that were never commissioned /opened i.e. funding not approved or were decommissioned/ permanently closed are not required.
- Standard day = 2 sessions am + pm
- 24 hour theatre usually for emergency surgery= 4 sessions (2 day +2 night)
Endoscopy rooms incorporated within theatre suite are included (usually in smaller hospitals only) but not endoscopy rooms in separate Endoscopy Units to theatre suite.

The focus is monitoring significant time unused for these reasons therefore details on the following are not required/ included:

- Sessions /operations cancelled due to short term (within the week) staff shortages associated with annual leave/sick leave etc.
- Sessions/operations cancelled due to temporary shortage of beds e.g. operation cancelled due to shortage on bed on day of surgery.
- Sessions/ operations cancelled due to patients being deemed unfit for surgery.
- Details of Operating Theatres within Maternity Units used for caesarean sections etc.
- Details of sessions unused in one room as staff required to assist with emergency surgery in another room.

Type of Room (Operating Theatre / Minor Ops / Endoscopy) <i>Enter OT, MO or ES</i>	Number of rooms	Number of rooms unused	Total No. of days unused	Days unused refurbishment / maintenance	Days unused Cost containment 2021	Days unused staff shortages
Operating Theatre	230	2	106	10	2	37
Minor Theatre	14	1	1.5	0	0	1
Note: there are no recorded submissions for the following sites for this period						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MRH Mullingar • Mayo University Hospital 						

Working Definitions used (agreed with National Clinical Programme for Surgery)

An operating theatre (OT) is a self-contained, aseptic room in which sterile and other surgical procedures can be carried out under general or regional anesthesia; is normally equipped with an operating table, an anesthetic machine and adjustable illumination and whose size varies depending on the complexity of procedures and

the equipment they require, varying from relatively small, such as for day surgery, to larger for complex procedures such as transplantation or open heart surgery.

A minor operations room (minor ops) (MO) is a self-contained, clean room in which low complexity sterile, and other surgical procedures can be carried out under local or regional anesthesia and is normally equipped with an operating table and adjustable illumination.

An endoscopy procedure room (ES) is a dedicated room where medical endoscopy is performed on patients on trollies, commonly under sedation, with cameras used to visualize structures within the body such as the digestive, respiratory or genitourinary tracts.

Cancelled/Suspended activity

The National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF) have advised that they are not in a position to provide the requested cancellation data, as within their remit they do not collect and collate cancellation activity, namely; numbers treated /cancellations, etc. In terms of cancellation data generally and in this instance, there are challenges arising with the data collected by the NTPF, not all hospitals return cancellation information thus impacting a true reflection of overall numbers. In addition, there are a number of caveats related to data validity and furnishing this data would not provide an accurate reflection of the cancellation status nationally. The NTPF have advised that releasing data that is heavily caveated is not ideal as these caveats are often missed or misunderstood, therefor in this instance the data is not available.

I trust that this answers your question.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Trish King', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Trish King
General Manager
Acute Operations