



Health Protection Surveillance Centre
25-27 Middle Gardiner Street
Dublin, Ireland,
D01 A4A3
Ph +353 1 8765300
Fx +353 1 8561299
info@hpsc.ie
www.hpsc.ie

6th September 2021

Deputy Peadar Tóibín
Dáil Éireann,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2

Re: PQ 41480/21 To ask the Minister for Health if persons who died from non-Covid-19 related illnesses but who had tested positive for Covid-19, though they were asymptomatic at the time of death, are included in the Covid-19 death figures of Ireland; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Tóibín

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question which has been referred by the Minister for Health to the Health Service Executive for direct response.

For surveillance purposes, COVID-19 deaths include deaths in all possible, probable and confirmed COVID-19 cases (as per the COVID-19 case definition) and all should be notified, unless there is a clear alternative cause of death that cannot be related to COVID-19 infection (e.g. trauma). There should be no period of complete recovery* from COVID-19 between the illness and death. All COVID-19 deaths are notified regardless of the setting, including home, community and hospital settings. HPSC reports all deaths among these COVID-19 cases as outlined above and does not just confine the death reporting to those who die within 28 days of a positive test. This is in line with how COVID-19 cases are reported by the majority of European countries and follows WHO guidance for COVID-19 death surveillance.

*Please note that discharge from ICU or hospital is not in itself evidence of recovery. To determine if the case had recovered, it should be based on clinical assessment or alternatively a period of ≥ 3 months must have elapsed since the case was initially diagnosed with COVID-19 and the case must have no evidence of COVID-19 infection prior to death as assessed by a clinician.

Deaths not reported as COVID-19 deaths:

1. Persons with COVID-19 may die directly due to accidents. Such deaths are not due to COVID-19 and should not be certified as such. This decision not to certify as COVID-19 death will be based on clinical judgement.
2. In some instances, a death due to COVID-19 may not be attributed to another disease (e.g. cancer) and would be counted as a COVID-19 death independently of pre-existing conditions that are suspected of triggering a severe course of COVID-19.

The HSE Health Protection Surveillance Centre publishes a weekly report on COVID-19 deaths reported in Ireland.

This report is available at: <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/surveillance/weeklyreportoncovid-19deathsreportedinireland/>

If you require any further information or clarification please do contact us.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Lois O'Connor MB MICGP MPH MFPHMI, IMC 021192

**Interim Director of HPSC,
25-27, Middle Gardiner St.,
Dublin 1.**