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Deputy Michael Healy-Rae
Dáil Éireann,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2

Re: PQ19048/22 To ask the Minister for Health if he will address a matter (details supplied) regarding Lyme disease; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Healy-Rae

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

Lyme disease is statutorily notifiable in Ireland, the notifiable entity being Lyme neuroborreliosis. In August 2018, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control announced that the European Commission had updated its communicable disease surveillance list - Lyme neuroborreliosis then became included in EU/EEA surveillance. In December 2018, Ireland included Lyme neuroborreliosis as a specified disease under Infectious Disease regulations, one of the first European countries to adopt this measure.

The case definition for Lyme disease is as follows:

Lyme disease (Neuroborreliosis) (*Borrelia burgdorferi*) Case Definition

Clinical Criteria

— Neurological symptoms according to [European Federation of Neurological Societies \(EFNS\)](#) suggested case definition, without other obvious reasons

Laboratory Criteria

A. Confirmed case

- Pleocytosis in cerebrospinal fluid, AND
- Evidence of intrathecal production of Lyme borreliosis antibodies, OR
- *Borrelia burgdorferi sensu lato* isolation, OR
- nucleic acid detection in cerebrospinal fluid

OR

— Detection of IgG Lyme borreliosis antibodies in blood specimen only for children (age under 18) with facial palsy or other cranial neuritis and a recent (< 2 months) history of erythema migrans

B. Probable case

- Pleocytosis in cerebrospinal fluid AND positive Lyme borreliosis serology in cerebrospinal fluid

OR

- Specific intrathecal Lyme borreliosis antibody production

Epidemiological Criteria

Not applicable

Case Classification

A. Possible case

Not applicable

B. Probable case

Any person meeting the clinical criteria and at least one of the laboratory criteria for probable cases

C. Confirmed case

- Any person meeting the clinical criteria and at least one of the laboratory criteria for confirmed cases

The following were identified in the document *Primary Prevention and Surveillance of Lyme Borreliosis in Ireland (produced in October 2019)*, as key elements of strategy for tick and Lyme awareness:

- The general public should have access to simple key health information on ticks, preventing tick attachment and Lyme disease
- This information should have a single source so that the likelihood of mixed messages or inaccurate information is minimised
- The media (including social media) should be used to ensure widespread transmission and penetration of these messages
- Simple messages should be reinforced at regular intervals through the use of social media.
- Media and other events should be intensified at the beginning of each tick biting season to bring the issue to public awareness.

Although cases of Lyme borreliosis are reported throughout the year infection is more commonly diagnosed during the summer season, coinciding with tick activity and high levels of outdoor human activity that may result in tick exposure. HPSC has been regularly posting seasonal information on Lyme for the general public and healthcare professionals.

Information provided by HPSC on www.hpsc.ie is reviewed and updated on a regular basis. The website covers topics for both healthcare professionals and the general public. The HPSC website provides free materials for printing including posters and leaflets. Information is targeted for specific risk groups e.g. children.

Information for the general public

- Lyme Disease: Factsheet for the general public
- Prevent tick bites and Lyme Disease: leaflets and posters
- Laboratory testing for Lyme Disease: Factsheet for the general public

Information for Clinicians and other healthcare professionals

- Lyme factsheet for health practitioners
- Erythema migrans diagnostic support tool
- Prevention and control of tick-borne disease in Europe
- Case definition for notification of Lyme neuroborreliosis
- Clinical management of Lyme borreliosis consensus statement
- Erythema migrans slide image set
- Results of a laboratory survey on *Borrelia burgdorferi* diagnostic methods in Ireland

In addition, the HPSC website hosts links to useful Lyme borreliosis resources from international public health bodies such as the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), Public Health England (PHE) and the Royal College of General Practitioners.

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

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Derval Igoe".

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

MRN: 009818