



Oifig an Stiúirthóra Náisiúnta  
Géaroiríochtaí

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Deputy Johnny Guirke  
Dáil Éireann  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2

15 June 2022

Re: Parliamentary Question (PQ) 32671/22

Dear Deputy Guirke

I refer to the following parliamentary question which you recently submitted to the Health Service Executive;

**PQ 32671/22 - To ask the Minister for Health the number of person hours spent in the public health system per month to deliver colonoscopies in each of the years 2015 to 2021, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Gastrointestinal endoscopy is a diagnostic procedure that involves an examination of the inner lining of the gastrointestinal tract.

An upper gastrointestinal endoscopy examines the oesophagus, stomach, and the first part of the small intestine (duodenum). The viewing tool, called an endoscope, is passed through the mouth.

A colonoscopy examines the inner lining of the large intestine (rectum and colon). This is performed by passing a small flexible tube through the rectum.

Colonoscopy is performed by healthcare professionals (endoscopists) who are undergoing or who have undergone specific training. This includes physicians, surgeons and nurses.

The HSE does not retain a national database of all healthcare professionals who perform colonoscopies. However, electronic reporting systems are used to record information about colonoscopies carried out in public (and private) hospitals. Each healthcare professional performing a colonoscopy is registered on these systems with a unique user ID. Information from public hospitals is in turn uploaded to a national database called NQAIS Endoscopy. Information from private hospitals is also uploaded to NQAIS Endoscopy.

Each year, data about the volume of colonoscopies performed (as well as other information) is published by National Gastrointestinal Endoscopy Quality Improvement Programme. The NQAIS Endoscopy database is administered by the National Gastrointestinal Endoscopy Quality Improvement Programme. The Programme was developed under the remit of the Conjoint Board in Ireland of the Royal College of Physicians and Royal College of Surgeons in conjunction with the Quality Improvement Directorate of the HSE. The programme is managed by the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland. Further information about the programme is available at <https://www.rcpi.ie/quality-improvement-programmes/gastrointestinal-endoscopy/>

#### Notes on the data reports:

1. It is not possible to extrapolate the number of endoscopists who carried out colonoscopies in public hospitals. The table overleaf includes the total number of endoscopists who performed colonoscopies across both public and private hospitals.
2. From 2019 onwards the participating hospitals are identifiable in the reports and therefore it is possible to determine the total number of colonoscopies performed in public hospitals; 72,908 in 2019 and 52,282 in 2020 (reflective of the challenges faced because of COVID-19 and the cyber-attack).
3. Information uploaded to NQAIS Endoscopy from 2015-2018 was published according to the academic/medical training year. Information covering the period July to December 2018 was published as a standalone/supplementary report which means that information from January 2019 onwards is published according to the calendar year.



Reports published by the National Gastrointestinal Endoscopy Quality Improvement Programme are available online at <https://www.rcpi.ie/quality-improvement-programmes/gastrointestinal-endoscopy/> and below is an extraction of data relevant to this PQ.

Year	National GI Endoscopy Quality Improvement Programme Data Report	Hospitals include in the report	Total number of endoscopists	Number of colonoscopies performed in <u>public</u> hospitals only
2016	1 <sup>st</sup> National Data Report	34 hospitals in total 29 public hospitals and 5 private hospitals	537	Data not available
2017	2 <sup>nd</sup> National Data Report	36 hospitals in total 29 public hospitals and 7 private hospitals	599	Data not available
2018 a	3 <sup>rd</sup> National Data Report	39 hospitals in total 31 public hospitals and 8 private hospitals	630	Data not available
2018 b	4 <sup>th</sup> National Data Report	42 hospitals in total 34 Public and 8 private hospitals	600	Data not available
2019	5 <sup>th</sup> National Data Report	44 hospitals in total 34 Public and 10 private hospitals	736	72,908
2020	6 <sup>th</sup> National Data Report	45 hospitals in total 35 Public and 10 private hospitals	745	52,282
2021	7 <sup>th</sup> National Data Report	Expected to be 46 hospitals in total 35 public and 11 private hospitals	TBC	TBC

I trust the above response answers the parliamentary question to your satisfaction.

Yours sincerely,

**Robert Kidd**  
**Assistant National Director**  
**Acute Operations**