



05 July 2022

Deputy Johnny Guirke
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Our Ref: EH/Communications

PQ32672/22: To ask the Minister for Health the number of cancers detected and the detection rate of same and the number of adenomas detected and the detection rate of same, detected through BowelScreen in each of the years from 2015 to 2021 and to date in 2022, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question.

People are eligible to take part in the BowelScreen programme once they reach the age of 60. Once the person gives consent they are issued with a FIT kit (screening) which is a test done at home and returned by post at their convenience.

The National Screening Service's (NSS) four programmes including, BowelScreen, were paused in March 2020. This move was taken on public health advice due to the situation with COVID-19. The pause in screening was put in place to protect participants and staff by complying with social distancing guidelines. In addition, the HSE temporarily redeployed staff and resources to the response to COVID-19. However, clinical staff continued to work within the programmes.

BowelScreen restarted issuing invites for screening to eligible people on a phased basis on 04 August 2020. People with a 'not normal' result are offered a colonoscopy. The programme continues to monitor colonoscopy capacity closely and invitations to participate are being issued relative to each unit's capacity.

Colorectal cancer screening is a preventative health measure. The primary objective of BowelScreen is to reduce people's risk of developing bowel cancer in the future, by detecting and removing pre-cancerous adenomas in the lining of the bowel. Also, if bowel cancer is found early through bowel screening, it's easier to treat and there's a better chance of recovery.

Cancer detection and Data Table

The following table highlights the detection rate of cancers detected and the same for adenomas detected from 2015 to the end of 2021. Verified data for 2022 is not yet available.



Column1	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Number of cancers detected	205	203	202	151	164	70	125
Detection rate (per 1,000 screened)	2.32	1.83	1.76	1.47	1.34	1.25	1.52
Number of adenomas detected	1,658	1,877	1,864	1,641	1,683	920	1,455
Detection rate (% of colonoscopies)	57.63	57.56	56.06	54.34	56.03	55.32	58.27

The pause in screening, along with COVID-19 infection control measures, which affect our capacity to screen, mean that people are waiting longer for their screening appointments.

The impact of COVID-19 and the cyber-attack means invitations in our current screening round (where we normally invite people for screening once every two years) are delayed by approximately a year. This means if they were due to be invited to be screened in 2021, we aim to invite them this year. We are prioritising inviting people who have been waiting for screening longest, and new entrants to the screening programme.

For other queries, screening participants can call the Freephone information line on 1800 45 45 55; email: info@screeningservice.ie; or contact their clinic directly.

I trust this information is of assistance to you, should you have any further queries please contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Fiona Murphy
Chief Executive
National Screening Service