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20th September, 2022

Deputy David Cullinane, TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

RE: PQ 42448/22

To ask the Minister for Health the number of persons on waiting lists for insulin pumps by hospital in tabular form; the number waiting for funding or waiting otherwise; the number under 18 and over 65 years; the number waiting by timeband; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Cullinane,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in relation to the above parliamentary question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have consulted with the National Clinical Programme for Diabetes on your question and have been informed that the following outlines the position.

Insulin pumps are small, computerised devices worn on the outside of the body and deliver insulin through a tube (called an infusion set) which is placed under the skin of the abdomen. An insulin pump replaces the need for frequent insulin injections by delivering insulin continuously throughout the day and night. People with diabetes still need to know how to adjust the pump and tell it how much insulin to administer at meal times. They also need to be able to make adjustments in their insulin pump settings based on changes in diet, lifestyle and other factors (including stress).

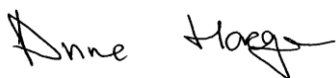
Recently published Irish research has demonstrated that uptake of insulin pump therapy in people with type 1 diabetes is low in Ireland (compared to other European countries) and is particularly low in those over 18 years of age¹. To be able to initiate and support patients in the use of an insulin pump, diabetes teams need specialist training. Data from a National Survey of Diabetes Care Services in Acute Hospitals in 2018², supplemented by updated information, showed that 15 of the 31 hospitals surveyed provide pump initiation services and/or provide follow-up to patients using insulin pumps.

The National Clinical Programme for Diabetes is presently completing a survey of adult services examining, in particular, the transition of adolescents from paediatric to young adult services and the availability of pump services in each adult service.

Information regarding waiting lists for insulin pump initiation is not routinely collected by the National Clinical Programme for Diabetes. In response to a review in February 2021 and, based on information returned by hospitals with pump clinics, there were 323 adults on a waiting list for insulin pump initiation in Ireland at the start of 2021. It is not possible to provide a breakdown by county or age group.

I trust this information is of assistance to you, but should you have any further queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Anne Horgan
General Manager

References

1. Gajewska, K.A., Bennett, K., Biesma, R. *et al.* Low uptake of continuous subcutaneous insulin infusion therapy in people with type 1 diabetes in Ireland: a retrospective cross-sectional study. *BMC Endocr Disord* **20**, 92 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12902-020-00573-w>
2. <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/cspd/ncps/diabetes/resources/national-survey-of-diabetes-care-delivery-in-acute-hospitals-2018.pdf>