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Réada Cronin TD

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Leinster House

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21st April, 2023

PQ 11676/23: To ask the Minister for Health whether any neurological, dermatological, respiratory or oncological illnesses are reported in higher proportion around Coillte planted areas than others; whether public health undertakes any evaluation or data collection on same; if not, if his Department will commit to doing so; if he will publish any data available.

Dear Deputy Cronin,

Thank you for your Parliamentary question. I have consulted with Dr Ina Kelly, Consultant in Public Health Medicine and Chair of the Public Health Medicine Environment and Health Group to answer the question.

The only reportable illnesses to Public Health are notifiable infectious diseases. These are notified so that Public Health can investigate and control such infectious diseases.

While there are data, e.g. hospital data, on other types of illnesses mentioned, these are not geo-referenced at the specific level that would be required to answer the above question. It should also be noted that variation across population in rates of illness occurs, but does not imply causation.

In general, trees and forests are considered to be of positive public health benefit, and collaborative working across sectors can increase the balance of benefits over risks.

I hope this information is useful in answering your question.

Yours sincerely,

Joan Gallagher

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