



Dearadh agus Nuálaíocht Chliniciúil; Oifig an Príohifigeach Cliniciúil
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24th May, 2023

Deputy Holly Cairns, TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

RE: PQ 16834/23

To ask the Minister for Health the steps he is taking to improve the diagnosis capacity and treatment of Lyme disease; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

RE: PQ 16835/23

To ask the Minister for Health if he will engage with a group (details supplied) to improve the diagnosis capacity and treatment of Lyme disease in Ireland; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

RE: PQ 24351/23

To ask the Minister for Health the steps he is taking to improve the diagnosis and treatment of Lyme disease; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Cairns,

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 Advisor and Group Lead, Acute Operations, (NCAGL AO) on your questions and have been informed that the following outlines the position.

Lyme disease is a tick-borne infection that occurs when recreational or occupational activities result in tick bites from an infected tick. It is relatively rare, with estimations that a small proportion of people in Ireland are infected (<5%). The infection is known to be endemic in certain locations. In these areas, GPs are familiar with the most typical presentation, which is a rash, often with a bull's eye appearance. More complicated cases require referral to infectious diseases clinics.

Patients with post-Lyme syndrome can be referred by their GP to a public hospital infectious diseases clinic in Ireland.

The infectious disease clinics operating in the public hospital system support the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) Guidelines regarding the diagnosis and treatment of Lyme Disease. Many hospital laboratories have the capacity to do Lyme serology (ELISA) locally and where not, referral of

samples to the National Virus Reference Laboratory (NVRL) occurs. Confirmatory testing (western blot - an analytical technique in molecular biology and immunogenetics to detect specific proteins in a sample of tissue) is referred to Porton Down which is the UK Referral Laboratory.

Treatment is in line with national and international best practice guidelines, as outlined in Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) guidelines¹ that have been endorsed by the Infectious Diseases Society of Ireland (IDSI)².

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. Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA)
<http://www.idsociety.org/>
<https://www.idsociety.org/practice-guideline/lyme-disease/>
2. Infectious Diseases Society of Ireland (IDSI) - <https://www.idsociety.ie/about-the-idsi/links>