



Oifig an Stiúirthóra Náisiúnta  
Géaroiríochtaí

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**Date: 02 /02 /2024**

Deputy Matt Shanahan, TD

Dáil Éireann

Leinster House

Dublin 2

**PQ No.4373 /24**

**To ask the Minister for Health the number of staff members required to sufficiently staff a neurology Department within a Model 4 Irish hospital; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy Shanahan,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

**Response:**

The National Clinical Programme for Neurology (NCPN) Model of Care (MOC)(2016) highlights population-based staffing needs for neurology within the Republic of Ireland. Staffing specifically within each individual Model 4 Hospital will be very much dependent on varying factors, such as population served; neurology specialty service offering within the department and number of dedicated inpatient neurology beds.

In Ireland the ratio of neurologist to population is 1:132,352, ranging in some areas of the country to as high as 1:200,000. The median number across Europe is 4.84 per 100,000. The ratio recommended by the Royal College of Physicians (2011) is 1:70,000 (*NCPN MOC, 2016*). There are currently 44 approved consultant neurologist posts in the Republic of Ireland serving a population of over 5 million. To meet recommended ratios, Ireland needs a minimum of one consultant neurologist per 70,000 population, or a minimum of 72 neurologists. Currently there is a shortfall of 28 consultants. Each Neurologist should be supported by a full multidisciplinary team at inpatient and outpatient level.

The UK National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence recommends that for a population of five hundred thousand people, at least three nurses working with patients with multiple sclerosis (MS), three nurses working with patients with Parkinson's disease (PD), and nine nurses should be available for epilepsy (*Neurology MOC, 2016*). There has been recent investment in neurology nursing from the HSE via the modernized care pathways in 2023 and the HSE's estimates process in 2022, which is providing additional and much needed resourcing in Neurology nursing.



Determining appropriate staffing levels for health and social care professionals within neurology is a significant challenge. Different methods include ratios i.e. where staff are provided within a set ratio per measure such as number of patients or population is one method or staffing according to acuity as another method. The challenge within neurology services is that patients present in many ways i.e. through Emergency Departments, through primary care services etc. The following ratios relating to staffing ratios for inpatient neuro rehabilitation beds as per Table 16 of the *Neurology MOC, 2016*.

Ratio of HSCP for In-patient Specialist Rehabilitation Service for every 20 beds	
Physiotherapy	4 WTE
Occupational Therapy	4 WTE
Speech & Language Therapy	1.5-2.5 WTE (depending on whether patients with tracheostomy are accepted)
Clinical Psychologist	1.5-2 WTE
Social Worker	1-1.5 WTE
Dietitian	0.5-0.75 WTE. (These ratios are for medically stable patients for more acute care, dietitian staffing should be more reflective of the AFRM 2011 standards 1.0 WTE per 10 patients)

Table 16; Ratio of HSCP for inpatient rehabilitation services<sup>44</sup>

I trust this answers your question to your satisfaction.

Yours sincerely,

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**Emma Benton**

**General Manager**

**Acute Operations**