



8th April, 2025

Deputy Catherine Connolly, TD
Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

RE: 10239/25

To ask the Minister for Health the current status of the epilepsy pregnancy register; the resources which have been allocated to this register; and if she will make a statement on the matter

Dear Deputy Connolly,

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 for Children and Young People (NCAGL C&YP) on your question and have been informed that the following outlines the position.

Epilepsy is the most common neurological disorder of young people in Ireland and it is estimated that 40,000 people currently have this condition. Of those, 25% at any given point are young girls and women potentially at reproductive age.

Valproate is a medicine licensed in Ireland to treat epilepsy and other conditions and can cause harm to unborn babies when taken during pregnancy. Treating women with epilepsy with Valproate cannot always be avoided.

To avoid women and girls of childbearing potential becoming pregnant when taking Valproate the HSE Valproate Pregnancy Prevention Programme (PREVENT) was established in 2018 in Ireland. Under the PREVENT Programme, treatment with valproate must be initiated and supervised by a medical specialist annually. This is to ensure that female patients taking valproate (Epilim®) are fully aware of the risks and the need to avoid becoming pregnant while taking it.

One of the aims of the PREVENT programme is to establish an Irish Pregnancy Registry for women with epilepsy. Work has been initiated within the HSE to support the development of this registry in Ireland as part of the PREVENT Programme and the Maternity Model of Care for Women with Epilepsy.

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