

## Covid 19 in the Dialysis and Kidney Transplant Population – 25/05/20

Coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid 19) is the infectious disease caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus; SARS-CoV-2. Patients with pre-existing medical diseases have been shown to be at higher risk of complications and death from this illness. Dialysis and kidney transplant patients have been identified as being extremely vulnerable as they all have multiple pre-existing medical conditions.

The Irish government introduced strict Covid 19 restrictions on social interactions on March 12<sup>th</sup> 2020. However, dialysis patients could not cocoon as they have to attend hospital or satellite dialysis units in person 3 times per week. This exposed them to a high risk of contracting Covid 19 and therefore serious illness and even death. The National Renal Office monitors the incidence and prevalence of Covid 19 in haemodialysis units in Ireland. It was evident that the number of Covid 19 cases was rising significantly by approximately 20 patients per week throughout March and early April.

In light of these concerns, the National Renal Office changed its guidance and with the support of HSE procurement supplied all haemodialysis patients with surgical masks to be worn. These were distributed during the second week of April. Patients were advised to wear these masks constantly from the time they were collected from their home and throughout the duration of dialysis until they returned home again. In addition, on the 14<sup>th</sup> April 2020, the NRO recommended that patients should not eat on dialysis.

This, in conjunction with the community measures led to a rapid and sustained decrease in Covid 19 infection in dialysis patients, by 50% ( 10 new patients per week) during the last 2 weeks of April, and 80% by early May ( 4 new patients in first week of May).

The NRO is pleased to report that there has been only one new case of Covid 19 infection in a dialysis patient reported to the NRO since 8<sup>th</sup> May.

In summary therefore, there has been a total of 115 patients with end stage kidney disease who were diagnosed as being Covid 19 positive ([Figure 1](#)), 87 haemodialysis patients, 2 peritoneal dialysis patients and 26 kidney transplants patients ([Figure 2 & 3](#)). This level of infection is significantly below the UK experience and is comparable to that reported in Europe.

Sadly, 31 patients, 27 haemodialysis and 4 transplant patients lost their lives as a result of Covid 19. 7 of these deaths were in March and 20 in April. No deaths in dialysis or kidney transplant patients have been reported since 16th May 2020. These numbers are consistent with outcome data reported by the European renal registry, and in the USA.

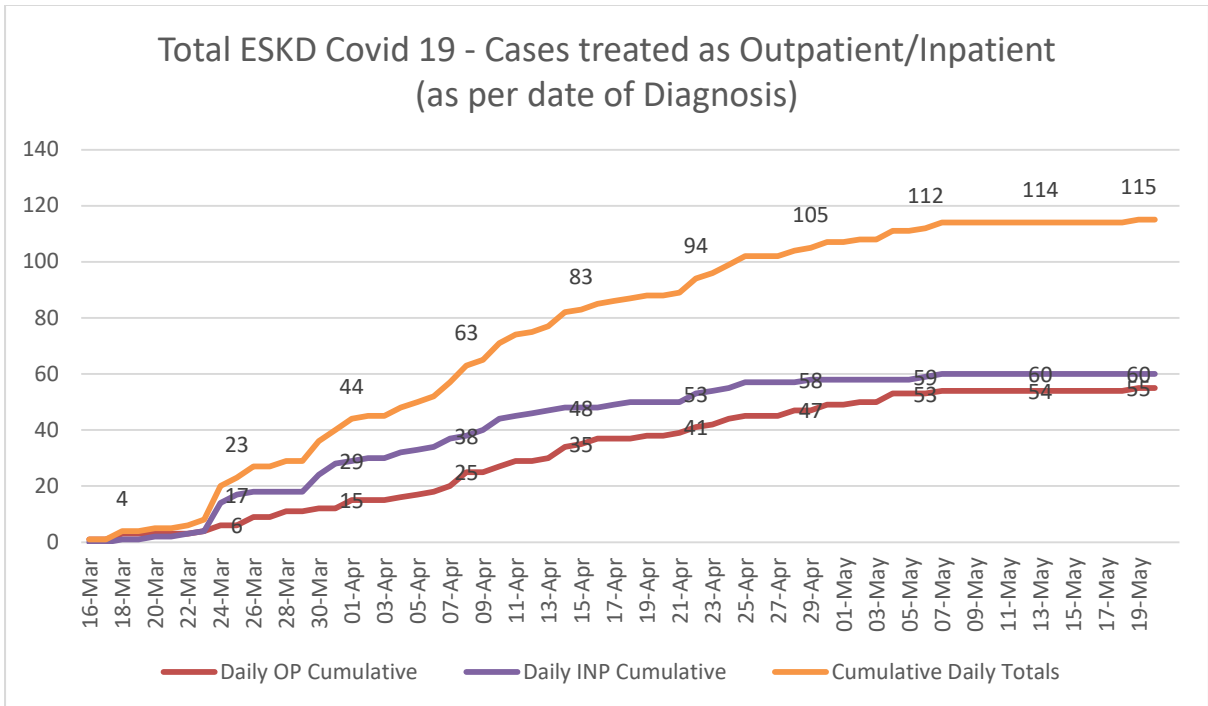


Figure 1

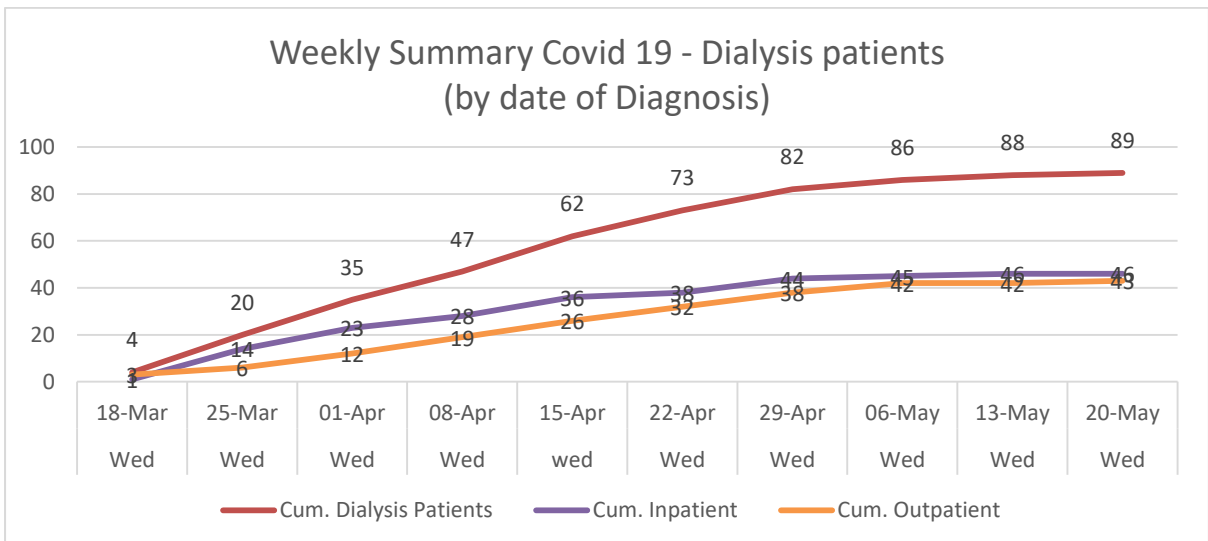


Figure 2

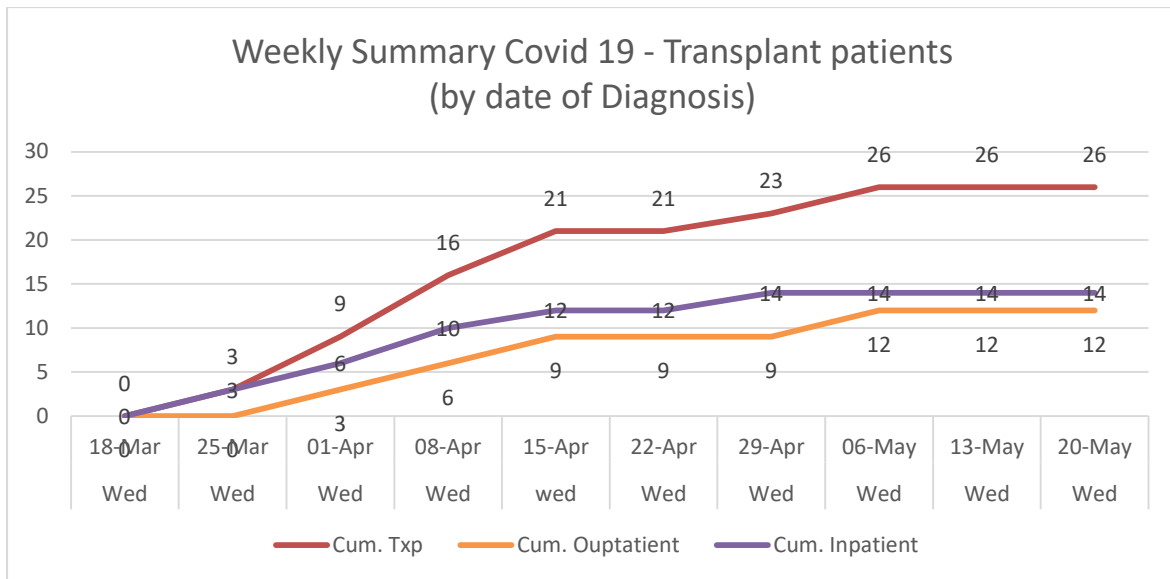


Figure 3