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9<sup>th</sup> April 2015

Deputy Thomas P. Broughan  
Dáil Eireann  
Kildare Street  
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**PQ 11456/15**

\* To ask the Minister for Health if he will provide, in tabular form, the number of persons being treated for abuse or misuse of steroids in 2012, 2013, 2014 and in 2015 to date.

Dear Deputy Broughan,

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:

Of those cases who entered treatment for abuse or misuse of steroids and where their information was recorded by centres participating in the National Drug Treatment Reporting System (NDTRS):

In 2012 there were less than five cases treated for steroids as a **main** problem drug. There were 11 additional cases treated for steroids as an **additional** problem drug.

In 2013 there were six cases treated as a **main** problem drug. There were seven additional cases treated for steroids as an **additional** problem drug.

Data for 2014 and 2015 is not yet available.

It is important to note (see attached Appendix) that the NDTRS only report on cases who enter treatment in a particular calendar year, not on those who continue in treatment from one year to the next without a break.

I trust this information is of assistance to you but should you have any further queries please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Joseph Doyle,  
National Planning Specialist

## Appendix

### National Drug Treatment Reporting System

Treatment for problem alcohol and drug use in Ireland is provided by statutory and non-statutory services, including residential centres, community-based addiction services, general practices and prison services.

For the purpose of the NDTRS, treatment is broadly defined as ‘any activity which aims to ameliorate the psychological, medical or social state of individuals who seek help for their substance misuse problems’. Clients who attend needle-exchange services are not included in this reporting system. From 2004 onwards, clients who report alcohol as their main problem drug have been recorded by the system. These data have been presented in an earlier paper in the HRB Trends Series (Fanagan *et al.* 2008). Drug treatment options include one or more of the following: medication (detoxification, methadone reduction, substitution programmes and psychiatric treatment), brief intervention, counselling, group therapy, family therapy, psychotherapy, complementary therapy, and/or life-skills training.

Compliance with the NDTRS requires that one form be completed for each new client coming for first treatment and for each previously treated client returning to treatment for problem drug use. Service providers at treatment centres throughout Ireland collect data on each individual who attends for first treatment or returns to treatment in a calendar year.

Staff at the NHIS unit in the HRB compile anonymous, aggregated data, which are analysed and reported at national and EU levels.

The main elements of the reporting system are defined as follows:

*All cases treated* – describes individuals who receive treatment for problem drug and/or alcohol use at each treatment centre in a calendar year, and includes:

*Cases assessed only* - describes individuals who were assessed but who did not progress to treatment

*Previously treated cases* – describes individuals who were treated previously for problem drug/alcohol use at any treatment centre and have returned to treatment in the reporting year;

*New cases treated* – describes individuals who have never been treated for problem drug/alcohol use; and

*Status unknown* – describes individuals whose status with respect to previous treatment for problem drug/alcohol use is not known.

In the case of the data for ‘previously treated cases’, there is a possibility that individuals appear more than once in the database: for example, where a person receives treatment at more than one centre or at the same centre more than once per year.