

National Histopathology Quality Improvement (NHQI) Programme SUMMARY REPORT



What is the NHQI Programme?

The aim of the NHQI Programme is to set national standards which can be used to drive quality improvements in labs (laboratories) and nationally within histopathology.

Reporting Timeline



How is information collected and used by the Programme?

[CLICK HERE FOR DETAILS](#)



Key Quality Indicators

[CLICK HERE FOR DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS AND TARGETS](#)



Addendum Reporting



Autopsy



Frozen Section



Intradepartmental Consultation



Multidisciplinary Team Review



Turnaround Time

Words and Phrases to Help You Understand Report Findings

Histopathologist	Histopathology
Histology	Cytology
General Centres	Cancer Centres
Key Quality Indicator	Target
Recommendation	

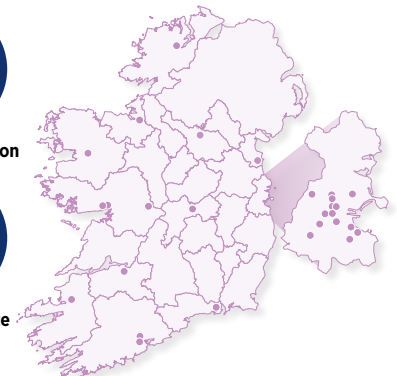
28 Participating Laboratories

21
PUBLIC
LABS

100% Participation

7
PRIVATE
LABS



Only one private lab yet to join Programme



**FACULTY OF
PATHOLOGY**
ROYAL COLLEGE OF
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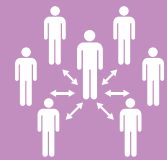


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Addendum Reporting		WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR PATIENTS?
	The average of all labs met the targets in 2022 and 2023.	It is reassuring to know that histopathologists perform many checks on their reports before sending them back to your doctor. These checks help them to discover any changes that should be made as quickly as possible.
Autopsy		WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR PATIENTS?
	The average of all labs did not meet the target for intradepartmental consultation in autopsy cases in 2022 and 2023. An autopsy quality improvement committee has been set-up to look at improving the collection of all autopsy data across the country.	Autopsy can provide vital answers following the death of a family member. The collection of information on adult autopsy for the NHQI Programme is important as this can help those who carry out post-mortem examinations to develop and agree quality standards.
Frozen Section		WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR PATIENTS?
	The average of all labs for frozen section turnaround time did not meet the target for 2022 and 2023. The average of all labs met the targets in 2022 and 2023 for concordance (agreement between frozen section and final diagnosis) and deferral (no diagnosis made until after more complex review of tissue sample) rates.	The findings in this report indicate that the average of all labs was above target for agreement between the diagnosis made during the surgery and the final diagnosis made after a more complex analysis of the tissue sample. This can benefit the patient where it helps to avoid further surgeries. The programme notes that delayed turnaround times in frozen section impact patients' care and encourage labs to review their processes to try to improve these times.
Intradepartmental Consultation (IDC)		WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR PATIENTS?
	The average for all labs was above target in 2022 and 2023 for histology and cytology cases. Labs did not meet this target in 2023 for autopsy cases.	Evidence suggests that intradepartmental consultation (IDC) improves patient care. It is reassuring that in Irish laboratories there is a high percentage of IDC taking place.
Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) Review		WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR PATIENTS?
	The average of all labs was above targets in 2022 and 2023. Cancer centre labs did not meet all targets for the presentation of cases at MDT review. This included the discussion of cancer surgery cases, which was just below target.	Research shows that many benefits arise from MDT review for patient management.
Turnaround Time (TAT)		WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR PATIENTS?
	The average for all labs did not meet the target in 2022 and 2023 for histology cases. The average for all labs was above target for one out of two cytology categories.	A longer turnaround time means that the patient is waiting longer to learn if they have a serious diagnosis. A range of factors can impact on a lab's ability to complete a patient's case within the target time such as overall workload, the number of consultants, medical laboratory scientists and other support staff employed.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- The NHQI Programme recommends that the relevant HSE Health Regions senior management teams are aware of and avail of quarterly reports from hospital management. It is also the responsibility of the public, voluntary and private hospital management to use the findings in the quarterly report to inform key decisions locally and regionally identifying areas where resources are required to meet growing demand and to ultimately benefit patient care. It is the responsibility of the individual labs to ensure the reports are sent to hospital management once complete.
- The NHQI working group recommends that the number of cancer resection cases being discussed at MDT Review is audited locally as this year's data reveal a relatively low number were discussed at MDT. The responsibility for this recommendation should lie with local lab and hospital management.
- The NHQI Programme strongly recommends that accountable management in participating public, voluntary and private hospitals are responsible for ensuring that the findings in this report are used to identify factors that contribute to labs not reaching turnaround time targets for histology and cytology cases and to develop action plans in conjunction with the labs concerned as a matter of priority.



MESSAGE FROM OUR PPI REPRESENTATIVE

Ms. Ashling O'Leary

**PPI Representative, NSQI Steering Committee
Vice Chair, Patients for Patient Safety Ireland**



My name is Ashling O'Leary, from Patients for Patient Safety Ireland. I joined the National Specialty Quality Improvement (NSQI) Programmes as a patient partner this year, 2024, and in attending my first meeting was invited to assist on producing patient summary leaflets. As this was a new venture for all involved, there was lots of learning and plain English terms to be explored and measured.

A clinical audit is a process that seeks to identify where improvements can be made within healthcare services by measuring them against evidence-based standards, thus ensuring patients can achieve the same level of care in all centres, with timely, accurate and complete pathology diagnoses and reports. Histopathology is the examination of tissues from the body under a microscope to spot the signs and characteristics of disease,

histopathology reports influence the majority of patient treatment decisions and play a vital role in patient safety.

My purpose in being involved is to ensure that a patient voice is heard and is central to all aspects of patient care in their journey, and by helping to prepare this leaflet, I hope to make histopathology standards of care easier to understand.

Ashling O'Leary

Royal College of Physicians of Ireland
Frederick House, South Frederick St.,
Dublin 2, D02 X266.

Phone: +353 1 863 9700
Email: SQIProgrammes@rcpi.ie
www.rcpi.ie



National
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