

AB226. SOH21AS266. The state of play of chronic pain services in Ireland 2020: a national survey

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Background: Chronic pain medicine services have historically been under resourced in Ireland. We undertook a survey of all chronic pain services in publicly funded hospitals in Ireland to quantify extent and geographical distribution of services.

Methods: Using the British Pain Society's Core Standards for Pain Management Services in the UK (2015), a 21-point questionnaire was devised. Clinicians from each department providing chronic pain medicine services to patients in the public healthcare system in Ireland were contacted and questionnaire completed. Waiting list data was available from the national treatment purchase fund website.

Results: There was a 100% response rate. Twenty-seven consultants representing 16.6 whole time equivalents (WTE) are practicing chronic pain medicine across 16 different public hospitals in Ireland. This amounts to 0.55 specialists (0.34 WTEs) per 100,000 of population. Supporting these are 21 WTE for non-consultant hospital doctors (NCHDs), 26.5 WTEs for nursing, 8 WTEs for physiotherapy, 6.2 WTEs for clinical psychology and 20.65 WTEs for administrative staff. No department reported a dedicated clinical pharmacy service. 93.75% of departments

(n=15) are providing interventional therapies. There are five pain management programmes nationally. 37.5% departments (n=6) are providing a neuromodulation service with 43.75% (n=7) providing an intrathecal drug delivery pump insertion/replacement service.

Conclusions: Shortage in allied health resources is of particular concern in chronic pain services in Ireland. Patient access is limited by these shortfalls as evidenced by significant waiting lists. To address this the specialty needs increased resources to improve access to care and bring our services in line with international recommendations.

Keywords: Chronic pain; Ireland; resources; services; survey

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Footnote

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Ethical Statement: The authors are accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

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