

Figures Show 324 Reactions to Vaccine

Figures from the Irish Medicines Board (IMB) on adverse reactions indicate the meningitis C vaccine has caused 324 reactions in 143 children in Ireland. The meningitis C vaccine was introduced at the beginning of October, with some 350,000 doses administered by mid December. There were, however, concerns about the lack of proper equipment in GP's offices to cater for possible reactions.

The report includes episodes of rashes, fever, vomiting, dizziness and fainting episodes. There were also three reports of meningitis, two of them type B meningitis which were believed to have been coincidental. The third was a "very mild" case of meningitis C.

There have been almost 60 official reports of adverse reactions in children to the MMR vaccination over the past five years. The IMB figures indicate 59 adverse reactions to the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine were reported in the State since 1996.

The joint Oireachtas Committee on Health and Children is looking at childhood vaccinations in response to public concern about a suggested link between the MMR vaccine and autism, and in response to poor take-up rates. Its hearings continue this month.