

F-2012-00110 – Cases of OHSS reported to the HFEA

13 June 2012

Summary of request

The Authority was asked for verification of the figure reported by the press recently of the number of OHSS cases in the UK. Also, information held about the numbers of case of OHSS, preferably categorised by severity.

HFEA response

The HFEA does not recognise the figure of nearly 30,000 cases of OHSS quoted in the press article referred to. The Authority understands this figure was misquoted by the press and was, in fact, the number of treatment cycles where more than 20 eggs were collected, which, as you will appreciate, is not the same as the number of cases of OHSS. In cycles of fertility treatment involving egg collection, the HFEA does hold information about the number of eggs collected and this information is readily available in an online anonymised dataset available on the HFEA website at:

<http://www.hfea.gov.uk/5874.html> .

The HFEA does not collect or hold comprehensive information about the incidence of OHSS in the UK. The HFEA Register does not enable reliable identification of clinically confirmed cases of OHSS, however, the HFEA has issued a series of General Directions (<http://www.hfea.gov.uk/188.html>) relating to the reporting of adverse incidents. The current set of Directions defines an 'adverse incident' as including OHSS and since October 2009 centres have been required to report cases of OHSS that require a hospital admission and have a severity grading of severe or critical. We are aware that, although not required by Directions, centres also sometimes report only mild or moderate OHSS. We are also aware that some centres consistently report no adverse incidents.

An analysis carried out in preparation for the Scientific and Clinical Advances Committee meeting on the 4th May 2011 of adverse incident reports between March 2010 and February 2011 showed 217 reported incidents involving OHSS. These covered a total of 227 cases of OHSS. The paper presented to the Committee is available on our website at: <http://www.hfea.gov.uk/1127.html> . The Committee's discussion of the item is also published in minutes on the same page. Adverse incident reports for the years 2008 and 2009 show 64 and 114 reported cases of OHSS respectively. For the reasons set out in the paragraph above, we do not consider the figures above to be the true incidence of OHSS.