

Domiciliary invasive ventilation for adults with spinal cord injuries

THE PURPOSE

Our HTA was conducted to inform the national delivery of care for adults with spinal cord injuries who require permanent invasive mechanical ventilation and can be discharged home.

It was requested by the Health Service Executive and the National Rehabilitation Hospital.

WHAT IS A SPINAL CORD INJURY (SCI)?

Spinal cord injury (SCI) is damage to the spinal cord resulting from accidents, falls, or diseases that can cause partial or complete loss of sensation and motor function below the injury site.

The higher up the spinal cord the injury occurs, the more extensive the range of impairments will generally be.

CHALLENGES IN DISCHARGE

While domiciliary ventilation is currently standard practice in Ireland for these patients, there are many challenges involved in their safe discharge home, such as funding and staffing.

INTERNATIONAL GUIDANCE

A review of international guidance found variation in standards and practice, but highlighted key areas of importance for delivering a domiciliary ventilation service.

BUDGET IMPACT

The total budget impact for the HSE of providing domiciliary ventilation care is estimated to be approximately €3.4 million per patient over five years.

It is unclear whether care at home would cost more or less than hospital care for these patients.

ADVICE

Finding from this HTA supports the development of a national clinical pathway for this patient cohort that extends into the community.

This pathway should have an overarching clinical governance framework, and would benefit from a national training and support role, and to be funded through a centralised budget.