



**By email**

Anne Anova  
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Our ref: 27/07/ef/210

5 August 2016

Dear Ms Anova

**Re: Ocular Toxocariasis**

Thank you for your email dated 27 July 2016 in which you ask for information about Ocular Toxocariasis. Your email has been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act.

You asked for a copy of the report entitled 'Epidemiology of Toxocariasis in England and Wales' by Kate Halsby, et. al.

In accordance with Section 1(1)(a) of the FOI Act, I can confirm that Public Health England (PHE) holds the information you have requested.

Under Section 21 of the FOI Act, this information is exempt from disclosure. Section 21 states that 'information which is reasonably accessible to the applicant' is exempt information and that such information 'may be reasonably accessible to the applicant even though it is accessible only on payment' (Section 21(2)(a)).

As mentioned in my previous letter (Case Reference 166), if you wish to access the full article, the relevant article can be found via the following link:

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/zph.12259/abstract>

However, in accordance with our Section 16 duty to provide advice and assistance I have attached the relevant excerpts of the article you have specified below.

If you have any queries regarding the information that has been supplied to you, please refer your query to me in writing in the first instance. If you remain dissatisfied and would like to request an internal review, then please contact us at the address above or by emailing [foi@phe.gov.uk](mailto:foi@phe.gov.uk)

Please note that you have the right to an independent review by the Information Commissioner's Office if a complaint cannot be resolved through the PHE complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner's Office can be contacted by writing to Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely

Freedom of Information Officer

Attached: Excerpts from 'Epidemiology of Toxocariasis in England and Wales' by Kate Halsby, et. al.

## **ATTACHMENT**

The Hospital for Tropical Diseases (HTD) recorded 127 cases with positive laboratory results for toxocara in England and Wales between 2000 and 2009 (Fig. 1). Fifty of the cases were male, and 56 were female; for the remaining 21, the sex was unknown. The median age of diagnosis was 39 years for females and 40.5 years for males (range 0–83 years) (Fig. 2). Where information was available, 20 of 92 cases (21.7%) reported ocular involvement. No information on the organism species was available.

[...]

A full data set was not available for HTD prior to 1999, but they have historically seen higher numbers of positive serological tests, with 73 positive tests (of which 46 cases had ocular damage) recorded in 1980, and 111 positive results (52 with ocular damage) in 1981 (unpublished data from the Toxocara Reference Laboratory at HTD). A paper by Ree et al. shows that between May 1982 and May 1983, 271 positive results were obtained, of which ocular toxocariasis probably accounted for between 24 and 102 of the infections (Ree et al., 1984).

[...]

Laboratory diagnosis of toxocariasis is still relatively insensitive, especially for ocular cases where serological tests on peripheral blood may give a number of false negatives. In many cases, the diagnosis may be based on clinical evidence alone, which requires a medical professional with an understanding and knowledge of the symptoms of this relatively rare infection. It must also be noted that the cases identified in this paper are devoid of epidemiological history, for example travel history. Some of the cases may have been acquired abroad, but it is not possible to say from the data available.