

12th November 2021

'Spiking' incidents & advice for the public

There has been extensive media coverage about incidents of 'spiking' where members of the public feel they have been injured with a sharp implement such as a needle and the understandable worry that a toxic substance may have been administered. The experience of Irish Emergency Departments (EDs) has been that such incidents are relatively few. In general, they are very low risk for the transmission a blood-borne infection.

While EDs are there to ensure that acutely unwell patients receive the necessary emergency care they require, they have no role in situations where a victim or potential victim of such an incident is not acutely unwell as a result. Suggestions that various 'tests' can be carried out to ascertain what, if any, substance has been inoculated are ill-informed as the only purpose of toxicology tests in the ED is to assist treatment in those who are acutely unwell.

Management of needle-stick injuries includes a detailed assessment of the risk of transmission of serious blood-borne infection. The risk of the transmission of a blood-borne infection in the kind of 'spiking' incidents being reported is remote and therefore the public should be reassured that this is not something to be concerned about.

Attendance at an ED is therefore unnecessary where a person feels that they may have sustained such an injury but are feeling well. Such incidents should be reported promptly to An Garda Síochána.

Where a victim of such an incident is acutely unwell, the Emergency Services should be contacted in the usual way and such patients will be brought to the ED for further medical management.

The HSE has provided advice to the public on [Drink Spiking and Date Rape Drugs](#) which the Association would recommend individuals to view.

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