

Huge Rise in Patients Seeking the Anonymity of Online Enquiries for Sensitive Body Issues

Research reveals most common procedures in Ireland for sensitive health concerns

- **Skin procedures are top priority with 124% increase in enquiries for scar removal**
- **Male breast reduction enquiries up by 105% and costs €3,862 on average in Ireland**
- **Colonic irrigation enquiries increase by 42% over the past year**
- **Enquiries from Ireland to overseas clinics increase by 83%**

Monday 5th October, 2015: New research has revealed a significant increase in online enquiries in Ireland for cosmetic and medical procedures which treat sensitive body issues, according to private healthcare search engine WhatClinic.com. The most common sensitive issue that patients seek treatment for is scar removal, and enquiries to clinics in Ireland have increased by 124%* in the past year for the treatment, which costs on average €144.

WhatClinic.com's list of common sensitive procedures includes:

- **Acne Treatment:** Treatment for acne saw an increase in enquiries of 86% over the past 12 months. The vast majority of people searching for this treatment were women (81%) and interestingly, the largest age group researching acne treatment were those aged 25-34, representing 38% of traffic.**
- **Male Breast Reduction.** Enquiries for Gynecomastia surgery saw a sharp increase (up 105%) over the past year. Gynecomastia is a condition found in men where the breast or breasts become enlarged. This can be triggered by hormonal imbalances, or can simply be due to obesity. The average cost of male breast reduction in Ireland is €3,862. Of those who searched for this treatment on WhatClinic.com, 30% were aged between 18-24, indicating that this is a growing issue for younger patients.
- **Colon Cleanse:** Interest in colonic irrigation is growing as enquiries have increased by 42%, and those wishing to cleanse will pay on average €181 for this treatment in Ireland. Almost three quarters of those who sought this treatment were women (74%).

- **Piles:** Haemorrhoid treatment is number five on the list and clinics in Ireland have seen enquiries almost double in the past year, with a 97% increase. Unfortunately, haemorrhoids will affect 50% of people at some stage in their lives². It is fairly common during pregnancy, and can be exacerbated by poor diet or intestinal issues³.
- **Baldness:** Certainly a sensitive issue, but with more high profile people like James Nesbitt and Louis Walsh talking openly about treatment, it's not surprising that a variety of solutions are becoming more popular. Enquiries for Hair Loss Treatment**** have risen by 62% in the past twelve months, at an average cost of €765 in Ireland.
- **Warts, Sweating and Fungus:** There were marked increases in enquiries across a number of small but inconvenient body issues over the past 12 months. Enquiries for Wart Removal, Excessive Sweating and Toenail Fungus were up 55%, 29% and 126% respectively to clinics in Ireland in the past 12 months.
- **Sexual Dysfunction:** Treatment for Sexual Dysfunction rounds off the Irish top ten, with a 66% increase in enquiries for this range of treatment and counselling. Unlike the majority of searches for other treatments, more than two thirds of traffic for this was from men (67%) with those aged 25-34 the most likely to search for treatment.

Top ten most common procedures for sensitive body issues:

(Based on volume of enquiries to clinics in Ireland listed on WhatClinic.com in the past year)

	Procedure	Increase in enquiries to Irish clinics	Average starting price IRE
1.	Scar Removal	124%	€144
2.	Acne Treatment	86%	€84
3.	Gynecomastia	105%	€3,862
4.	Colonic Irrigation	42%	€181

5.	Haemorrhoids Treatment	97%	€60****
6.	Wart Removal	55%	€66
7.	Excessive Sweating Treatment	29%	€503
8.	Hair Loss Treatment	62%	€765
9.	Toenail Fungus Treatment	126%	€212
10.	Sexual Dysfunction Treatment	66%	€72

General interest in overseas treatments is on the rise with an 83% increase in enquiries from patients in Ireland. The UK, Turkey and Poland are all popular destinations for patients travelling abroad. The priciest treatment listed above, Gynecomastia, has certainly driven medical tourism enquiries abroad, and for surgical treatments in particular, there are significant cost savings to be made. Patients travelling to Poland for Gynecomastia can save up to 60% on the treatment.

Turkey also has become a medical tourism hot-spot, with Irish men travelling to the country for hair loss procedures, both surgical and non-surgical, and many Turkish clinics offering treatment packages that include hotels and transfers.

Commenting on the findings, **Emily Ross, Director, WhatClinic.com** said: *“Sometimes people put off seeking treatment because they feel embarrassed, or because they believe that their concern is too trivial. But if something is bothering you, and impacting on your quality of life, there are affordable experts on hand to listen and give you advice, no matter what your worry is. Small things can also sometimes be indicators of a bigger problem - so it’s important to address health issues before they get worse.*

“Medical professionals understand these problems and are there to help. It’s important to find a professional you feel comfortable talking to, so reading patient reviews can be very useful. Not only to find the right clinic, but to recognise that you are not alone,” she concluded.

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Notes to editors:

*This data is based on actual patient enquiries made to clinics in Ireland listed on WhatClinic.com, during the time range 01.09.2014 to 01.09.2015, compared to the period 01.09.2013 to 01.09.2014.

**Age and gender data is based on sample traffic of users to WhatClinic.com during the time range 01.09.2014 to 01.09.2015.

*** Hair loss treatment as offered by clinics on WhatClinic.com includes a wide range of non-surgical options to treat hair loss. 'Hair loss treatment' is separate to 'hair transplant treatment' which is a surgical procedure carried out either by Follicular Unit Transplantation or Follicular Unit Extraction.

**** While average prices were taken from a number of clinics, in this case there was only a limited number of prices on display. A sample price from one clinic is shown here.

References:

1. <http://www.hse.ie/eng/health/az/B/Breast-reduction/>
2. <http://www.hiqa.ie/system/files/HIQA-Haemorrhoid-Procedures-for-consultation.pdf>
3. <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/pages/piles-haemorrhoids-pregnant.aspx>

About WhatClinic.com:

WhatClinic.com is a global healthcare comparison website that enables patients to compare and review clinics across the globe, with online booking and independent price checks. With detailed listings for over 120,000 private healthcare clinics across 135 countries worldwide, WhatClinic.com helps consumers make an informed decision on elective medical treatments as conveniently as possible. WhatClinic.com was founded in 2007 by tech entrepreneur Caelen King and is headquartered in Dublin. Since its launch, over 60 million people have visited the site to find, compare and book treatments across a wide range of elective medical treatment.