



Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) which was partially transferred from the Department of Internal Affairs and received on 30 April 2020 by the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) for:

- "2. Are post-mortems being performed on ALL bodies of people being announced in the media as being Covid-19 virus related?*
- 6. Can anyone confirm the patients who have died through Covid related deaths in the media, were recently given the influenza vaccination?*
- 7. Will genetic testing prior to vaccinations be introduced after this Covid 19 scare?*
- 10. If the deceased dies of severe complications due to their ongoing history of ill health, is this going to be written as Covid 19 regardless of whether the patient had been tested or not?"*

Information relating to the request are outlined below.

Are post-mortems being performed on ALL bodies of people being announced in the media as being Covid-19 virus related?

No, post-mortems are not being performed on all bodies of deceased individuals who have died as a result of COVID-19, at this time. The Ministry is working to ensure that people are well-informed about COVID-19 matters and has covered topics such as this, and many others that might be of interest to you, in its media releases. These are publicly available in the following link: <https://www.health.govt.nz/news-media/media-releases>

Can anyone confirm the patients who have died through Covid related deaths in the media, were recently given the influenza vaccination?

Flu immunisation data and COVID-19 data are held in separate systems that cannot interface. To provide this information would involve sharing patient-identifiable information across Ministry directorates and cross-referencing this with the information in the National Immunisation Register. As such, I am unable to provide you with this information under section 18(g) of the Act as the information is not held by the Ministry or another agency subject to the Act.

Will genetic testing prior to vaccinations be introduced after this Covid 19 scare?

The Ministry has no plans for introducing genetic testing prior to vaccinations at this time.

If the deceased dies of severe complications due to their ongoing history of ill health, is this going to be written as Covid 19 regardless of whether the patient had been tested or not

The deceased will have the direct cause of death on their death certificate. In regards to severe complications of individuals with ongoing history of ill health, the disease or condition that occurred will be declared as the last part of the sequence of events or the conditions leading directly to death. COVID-19 related deaths will be listed on the death certificate as an "Antecedent cause of death". All efforts will be made to confirm the diagnosis of COVID-19 and in most cases this confirmation can be made from a positive test for the virus from a sample taken from the patient.

I trust this information fulfils your request. Under section 28(3) of the Act you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry website.

Yours sincerely



Natalie Richardson
Director
COVID-19 Response