

9 March 2022

s 9(2)(a)

By email: s 9(2)(a)
Ref: H202201568

Tēnā koe s 9(2)(a)

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) received on 17 February 2022 regarding overdose data. Please find a response to each part of your request below.

- *How many people overdosed (accidental or otherwise) using opioids (both prescription and recreational) from the year 2001 - 2021?*
- *How many of these overdoses (same specifics as above) occurred in Auckland?*

In relation to your request, the Ministry holds information on the number of publicly funded hospital discharges where the primary diagnosis was poisoning by opium, heroin, other opioids, or methadone (T40.0-T40.3). These hospitalisations are coded using the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD). We do not hold information on everyone in New Zealand who has overdosed, we hold information only if the event resulted in a hospitalisation.

This information includes some people who died, and additionally people with multiple hospitalisations (transfers, readmissions, multiple incidents) who may be counted more than once. Short stay emergency department events have been excluded from the data provided to you as some DHBs have changed their admission definition, which makes the information inconsistent over time. This information also includes both accidental and intentional overdoses and does not include events where opioids were identified as secondary diagnoses.

The Ministry has a factsheet about short stay emergency department events available at the following link: www.health.govt.nz/publication/factsheet-short-stay-emergency-department-events. This may provide additional clarity as to why this information has been excluded from the data provided to you.

While the Ministry cannot provide the exact data you have requested, the Ministry can provide you with the following (please refer to Appendix 1 of this letter):

- Table 1 includes the number of publicly funded hospital discharges where the primary diagnosis was poisoning by opium, heroin, other opioids, or methadone (T40.0-T40.3) excluding short stay ED events.

- Table 2 includes the number of publicly funded hospital discharges where the primary diagnosis was poisoning by opium, heroin, other opioids, or methadone (T40.0-T40.3) excluding short stay ED events where the patient was domiciled in Waitematā, Auckland or Counties Manukau DHB regions.

Both tables include information from 2000 to 2021.

For further specific data regarding Auckland, you may wish to contact Auckland DHB directly (ailsac@adhb.govt.nz).

- *What is the breakdown of the types of opioids that were involved in the overdoses?*
- *How many of the overdoses also included additional drugs (prescription and recreational)?*

To identify types of opioids and other drugs would involve manual inspection of records and would require substantial collation or research. As your request asks for data from 2001-2021, there is additional difficulty as some DHBs have changed their admission definition and therefore there has been some change in reporting behaviour between 1999 and 2012. As such these parts of your request are refused under section 18(g) of the Act as this is not part of the Ministry's usual reporting process.

Under section 28(3) of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry website at: www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases.

Nāku noa, nā



Gaynor Bradfield
**Manager, Office of the Deputy Director-General
Data and Digital**

Appendix 1

Table 1: The number of publicly funded hospital discharges where the primary diagnosis was poisoning by opium, heroin, other opioids, or methadone (T40.0-T40.3) excluding short stay ED events was between July 2000 and June 2021.

| Year | Discharges |
|-------------|-------------------|
| 2000/01 | 138 |
| 2001/02 | 145 |
| 2002/03 | 135 |
| 2003/04 | 148 |
| 2004/05 | 152 |
| 2005/06 | 174 |
| 2006/07 | 226 |
| 2007/08 | 221 |
| 2008/09 | 232 |
| 2009/10 | 237 |
| 2010/11 | 236 |
| 2011/12 | 200 |
| 2012/13 | 217 |
| 2013/14 | 213 |
| 2014/15 | 263 |
| 2015/16 | 255 |
| 2016/17 | 272 |
| 2017/18 | 258 |
| 2018/19 | 243 |
| 2019/20 | 287 |
| 2020/21 | 300 |

Table 2: The number of publicly funded hospital discharges where the primary diagnosis was poisoning by opium, heroin, other opioids, or methadone (T40.0-T40.3) excluding short stay ED events where the patient was domiciled in Waitemata, Auckland or Counties Manukau DHB regions, and excluding short stay ED events between July 2000 and June 2021.

| Year | Discharges |
|-------------|-------------------|
| 2000/01 | 23 |
| 2001/02 | 26 |
| 2002/03 | 25 |
| 2003/04 | 24 |
| 2004/05 | 25 |
| 2005/06 | 38 |
| 2006/07 | 37 |
| 2007/08 | 26 |
| 2008/09 | 29 |
| 2009/10 | 39 |
| 2010/11 | 38 |
| 2011/12 | 37 |
| 2012/13 | 34 |
| 2013/14 | 34 |
| 2014/15 | 38 |
| 2015/16 | 52 |
| 2016/17 | 68 |
| 2017/18 | 71 |
| 2018/19 | 73 |
| 2019/20 | 87 |
| 2020/21 | 94 |