

7 April 2022

s 9(2)(a)

By email s 9(2)(a)
Ref H202203786

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) on 10 March 2022 for information about the number of hospitalisations and deaths related to COVID-19 in New Zealand. Please see a response to each part of your request below.

- 1. The number of hospitalisations in Aotearoa / New Zealand that are COVID-19 related*
- 2. The number of hospitalisations in Aotearoa / New Zealand that are COVID-19 related and at time of hospitalisation were vaccinated (single, double or booster) by the Pfizer*
- 3. The number of hospitalisations in Aotearoa / New Zealand that are COVID-19 related of persons who were unvaccinated at time of hospitalisation*
- 4. The number of deaths in Aotearoa / New Zealand that are COVID-19 related*

The information that you have requested is publicly available on the Ministry's website and can be found at the following link: www.health.govt.nz/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-data-and-statistics.

- 5. The number of deaths in Aotearoa / New Zealand that are COVID-19 related and at time of death were vaccinated (single, double or booster) by the Pfizer*
- 6. The number of deaths in Aotearoa / New Zealand that are COVID-19 related of persons who were unvaccinated at time of death*

These parts of your request are refused under section 18(d) of the Act, as this information will soon be made publicly available at: www.health.govt.nz/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-data-and-statistics/covid-19-case-demographics. The Ministry is moving to a new approach to reporting deaths of people who have COVID-19. The Ministry will automatically report all deaths of people who die within 28 days of testing positive for COVID-19, which is in line with the approach used by the UK and many other countries. The Ministry will also be providing the following additional details that will include some deaths reported outside of the 28-day window:

- People for whom it is clear that COVID-19 is the cause of death.
- People who had (or were subsequently found to have) COVID-19 when they died but their cause of death was clearly not COVID-19 related.
- People whose cause of death is still under investigation e.g. it is being considered by the Coroner, but we know they had COVID-19 when they died.

Over time, as more information is provided about some of the reported deaths, the Ministry website data will be updated to reflect that. Whenever new deaths are publicly reported, the Ministry will also include a new total of deaths in its 1pm statements. You may wish to refer to the Ministry's update on the 10 March 2022 for further information: www.health.govt.nz/news-media/news-items/90-wairarapa-maori-fully-vaccinated-21015-community-cases-773-hospital-16-icu-1-death.

7. The number of cardiac related deaths by month from March 2021 to February 2022 (with the previous figures for that month e.g. March 2020: 65; March 2021: 68).

The Ministry has a Mortality web tool that provides the most recent (2019) and historical mortality data back to 1948.

Follow the link in the right-hand corner of the page to open the webtool: www.health.govt.nz/publication/mortality-web-tool.

For all our other published mortality data and stats please use this page: www.health.govt.nz/nz-health-statistics/health-statistics-and-data-sets/mortality-data-and-stats.

These publications include information about cardiac related deaths, but not for the time period you have requested. After the close of a calendar year, there is a 12–18-month process to assign cause of death codes to the majority of deaths in that year. The Ministry's clinical coding team reviews the death certificate and health history of the deceased, to assign cause of death codes. Approximately 10% of deaths are referred to the Coroner each year to determine cause. Deaths which require a coronial inquiry can take 2-3 or more years for cause of death to be assigned. We do not make mortality data available publicly until the majority of deaths have been assigned a cause of death, so that the data we release is complete and accurate.

The Ministry publishes preliminary mortality statistics, which do not include injury-related deaths information which are typically more influenced by coronial cases, in December each year. The 2020 preliminary data will be published in December 2022.

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.

Nāku noa, nā



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