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§ 9(2)(a)

By email: § 9(2)(a)
Ref: H2022017744

Tēnā koe § 9(2)(a)

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to Manatū Hauora (the Ministry of Health) on 29 November 2022 for information relating to antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in fungal organisms.

On 5 December 2022, your request was partially transferred under section 14(b)(ii) of the Act to Te Whatu Ora (Health New Zealand). You can expect a response from Te Whatu Ora in due course.

Please find a response to the remaining part of your request below:

This is to request under the Official Information Act 1982 any briefings, reports, strategy documents or details of monitoring activity relating to the emergence of drug resistant fungal infections in New Zealand's communities.

Manatū Hauora recognises that antimicrobial resistance (AMR), which includes resistance to antifungal medications, is a growing threat. We do not hold any briefings or reports which relate to antifungal resistance specifically, however response to antifungal resistance is within the broader scope of AMR. Therefore, your request is refused under section 18(e) of the Act, as the information requested does not exist. For your information, an overview of the government response to AMR is provided below.

In response to the growing threat of AMR, Manatū Hauora and the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) published the National Antimicrobial Resistance Action Plan (the Action Plan) in 2017. The Action Plan refers to antimicrobial resistance as a term covering resistance to antibacterial, antiviral, antiparasitic and antifungal medications. The Action Plan has five objectives and priority areas, including awareness and understanding, surveillance and research, infection prevention and control, antimicrobial stewardship and governance, collaboration and investment. The Action Plan outlines the importance of identifying emerging resistance and trends, which would include emerging resistance to medications for fungal infections.

The Action Plan can be found here <https://www.health.govt.nz/publication/new-zealand-antimicrobial-resistance-action-plan>.

On 3 March 2022 the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor (PMCSA) released *Kotahitanga: Uniting Aotearoa against infectious disease and antimicrobial resistance*. Resistance to antifungal medications is considered within this report, as one type of antimicrobial resistance. The government will be responding to this report and use this to inform the on-going response to AMR, including antifungal resistance.

The report can be found here <https://www.pmcsa.ac.nz/topics/antimicrobial-resistance-and-infectious-disease/>.

The Institute of Environmental Science and Research (ESR) operates as the national Antibiotic Reference Laboratory for bacterial human pathogens. ESR provides a reference service for the confirmation and characterisation of antimicrobial resistance and identification of resistance determinants. All diagnostic labs are requested to refer isolates with unusual resistance profiles to detect emerging resistance mechanisms.

ESR brings together data from various surveillance systems and sources to compile national antimicrobial resistance data. These sources include susceptibility testing, periodic surveys, and continuous monitoring for a range of pathogens and resistance mechanisms. ESR also collates and interprets antimicrobial susceptibility data from hospital and community diagnostic laboratories to understand and report on national resistance trends.

Resistance to antifungal medications may be monitored at a local or regional level. For example, LabPlus is the tertiary referral medical laboratory in Auckland City Hospital, which produced a report on antifungal susceptibility to yeast and mould isolates from 2001 to 2019. If you are interested, this report can be found here:

<http://www.labplus.co.nz/assets/Uploads/2001-2019-Antifungal-Susceptibility-Report.pdf>

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. 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 Manatū Hauora website at: www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests .

Nāku noa, nā



Dr Andrew Old
Deputy Director-General
Public Health Agency | Te Pou Hauora Tūmatanui