



30 March 2023

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Ref: H2023021623

Tēnā koe ████████████████████

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 9 March 2023 for information regarding post abortion counselling. I will respond to each part of your request in turn:

1. *Since 2020 how many women have requested post abortion counselling?*
2. *Since 2020 how many women have sought a third session of post abortion counselling?*

Manatū Hauora does not collect data on the number of individuals who have sought post-abortion counselling following termination. As such this part of your request is refused under section 18(g)(i) of the Act as the information requested is not held by the Ministry and there are no grounds for believing it is held by another agency subject to the Act. Post abortion counselling is not a discrete contracted service.

The “New Zealand Aotearoa Abortion Clinical Guideline, 2021”, directs health practitioners to be aware of the legal requirements regarding informing people of the availability of counselling, while recognising that counselling attendance must not be a requirement for having an abortion (Abortion Legislation Act 2020, section 8 refers).

More information can be found at New Zealand Aotearoa Abortion Clinical Guideline on the Manatū Hauora website here: www.health.govt.nz/publication/new-zealand-aotearoa-abortion-clinical-guideline.

3. *Does the Ministry of Health recognise that some women are suffering Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or psychological trauma following the termination of the life of their unborn child and require an extensive course of post abortion counselling?*

While the Act allows New Zealanders to ask for information from Ministers and government agencies, there is no requirement for agencies to provide or prove an opinion. Your question appears designed to engage in a debate about abortion, rather than a request for official information. The Act does not support requests where an opinion, comment, argument, or hypothetical statement is put to the Ministry for response, couched as a request for information.

As described within the “Standard for Abortion Counselling in Aotearoa New Zealand 2022”, the purpose of abortion counselling is to provide comprehensive support and enhance a person’s ability to assess and understand their situation, evaluate their options and make an informed choice or decision around abortion. It also includes post-abortion support, including grief counselling.

You can find a copy of this standard here:

www.health.govt.nz/publication/standard-abortion-counselling-aotearoa-new-zealand#:~:text=The%20standard%20is%20firmly%20grounded,abortion%20counselling%20and%20the%20principles.

4. Why are women who are suffering grief and sorrow following an abortion being required to pay a fee of \$100, for a third session of counselling?

Most abortion services and related counselling services are free in New Zealand to any pregnant person eligible for publicly funded health services (that the individual is a New Zealand citizen/permanent resident/holds the appropriate visa).

More information about support for people considering an abortion can be found on the DECIDE website: <https://decide.org.nz/en/abortion-services/get-support/>.

There is more information about eligibility available on the Te Whatu Ora - Health New Zealand website here: www.tewhatauora.govt.nz/our-health-system/eligibility-for-publicly-funded-health-services/guide-to-eligibility-for-public-health-services.

For information about funding for abortion services, please contact Te Whatu Ora in the first instance.

5. According to the Perinatal and Maternal Mortality Review Committee's annual reports the most prevalent cause of maternal death is suicide. Does the Ministry require that maternal death by suicide following an abortion are reported to Abortion Services at the Ministry of Health?

Manatū Hauora does not collect this information nor is this a requirement to collect.

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



Ruihua Gu
**Acting Group Manager, Quality Assurance and Safety
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