

7 November 2023

s 9(2)(a)

Email: s 9(2)(a)
Ref: H2023031858

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 Manatū Hauora (the Ministry of Health) on 20 September 2023. You requested:

1. *Has Medsafe or any other New Zealand entity tested the Pfizer covid-19 vaccine for DNA contamination? If so, please advise the date and the test results including any reports, memos, emails and other documentation in respect of this testing.*

Medsafe does not routinely test medicines prior to release to the market in New Zealand. Suppliers of medicines to New Zealand market are responsible for testing them according to approved specifications. As such, your request for the date and test results 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.

2. *I refer to South Carolina Professor Phillip Buckhausts' testimony before The South Carolina Senate Medical Affairs Ad-hoc Committee on 14 September 2023 in regard to his discovery of DNA (encapsulated in LNP) in the Pfizer covid-19 vaccines in the link below. In light of the evidence presented by Professor Buckhausts, I ask whether Medsafe intends to test covid-19 vaccines stored in New Zealand for DNA contamination? If there is an intention to investigate this manufacturing issue, please advise when and how this will be undertaken."*

Medsafe is aware of claims that mRNA vaccines contain 'excessive levels of DNA' encapsulated in lipid nanoparticles, and the claim that this presents a safety risk. These seem to arise following a pre-print publication by Kevin McKernan et al. Preprint publications have not yet undergone a thorough review and critical analysis by scientific peers.

This claim has been rejected by the scientific community at large. In response to the publication preprint and associated claims, experts have noted that to date, claims that COVID-19 mRNA vaccines can alter DNA in people lack a biologically plausible mechanism to explain how this would happen. Further, they note that neither the preprint by McKernan et al. nor the other studies cited in the article provided evidence for the claim that COVID-19 mRNA vaccines contain significant DNA contamination or that the vaccines can alter DNA in people.

Regarding Comirnaty, release testing according to registered specifications is conducted on every batch of Comirnaty prior to release. The amount of residual DNA is controlled with an appropriately chosen and qualified specification limit for DNA, / tested via qPCR; only batches that meet this specification are released.

Please accept our apologies for the delay in communicating a decision on 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



Chris James
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Medsafe