



30 May 2024

s 9(2)(a)

Ref: H2024041811

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 – Manatū Hauora (the Ministry) on 14 April 2024 for late term abortion data. You requested:

“For my research I’m interested in the numbers of abortions performed over 20 weeks gestation in both 2021 and 2022 for Māori and non- Māori.

I would also like to know if possible which regions the late term abortions have been accessed for both Māori and Non-Māori.

With the Māori women accessing a late term abortion in the under 20 group, how many had an abortion after 13 weeks gestation and did any young women of that cohort access an abortion after 20 weeks?

Finally, were there any fetuses who survived the late term abortion process and were there any fatalities of women accessing abortion after the procedure from the time of the abortion until 50 days afterwards?”

Regarding abortions performed “over 20 weeks gestation” we have interpreted this request as referring to all abortions occurring at **20 weeks’ gestation or greater**. In 2021, there were 17 and 87 abortions occurring at 20 weeks’ gestation or greater for Māori and non-Māori, respectively. In 2022, there were 20 and 80 abortions occurring at 20 weeks’ gestation or greater for Māori and non-Māori, respectively.

Due to low numbers of abortions occurring at this later gestation, your request for further regional breakdown for Māori and non-Māori individuals accessing abortion services at 20 weeks’ gestation or greater is withheld in full under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, to protect the privacy of natural persons.

Regarding Māori individuals accessing abortions within the ‘under 20’ age cohort, 39 accessed an abortion at 13 weeks’ gestation or greater in 2021, and 52 in 2022. Due to low numbers, further delineation by later gestation (at 20 weeks’ gestation or greater) within this age cohort is withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, to protect the privacy of natural persons. Where information is withheld under section 9 of the Act, I have considered the countervailing public interest in releasing information and consider that it does not outweigh the need to withhold at this time.

From 22 weeks of pregnancy, feticide (an injection to stop the fetal heart) takes place prior to the abortion. It is very unlikely that a live birth occurs after an intended abortion. In the event of a live birth, there is a requirement to provide appropriate care in the same way as for any other baby. What care is appropriate in the circumstances will depend on the clinical assessment of the baby. Appropriate care will be determined by the health practitioner in accordance with relevant standards and best practice guidance, and in consultation with the parent(s) and whanau.

Relating to your request for details around mortality, you may access the publicly available web tool here: <https://tewhatauora.shinyapps.io/mortality-web-tool/>. Any concerns about the safety of an abortion should be discussed with your abortion health care provider.

I trust this information fulfils your request. If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request with us, including this decision, please feel free to contact the OIA Services Team on: oiagr@health.govt.nz.

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
Regulation and Monitoring | Te Pou Whakamaru**