

[REDACTED]

Ref: H201807131

Dear [REDACTED]

Response to your request for official information

I refer to your request of 23 October 2018 under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) for:

- (1)- Information relating to the number of hospitalisations that have occurred, listed by year, over the past five years as a result of consuming psychoactive substances;*
- (2)- Information relating to the number of hospitalisations of minors over the past five years as a result of consuming psychoactive substances;*
- (3)- Information relating to the number of people assumed by the Ministry to consume psychoactive substances annually;*
- (4)- Information relating to the number of hospitalisations that have occurred, listed by year, over the past five years as a result of consuming cannabis;*
- (5)- Information relating to the number of hospitalisations of minors over the past five years as a result of consuming cannabis;*
- (6)- Information relating to the number of people assumed by the Ministry to consume cannabis annually;”*

On 2 November 2018, you clarified that the term “psychoactive substances” used in parts of your request should be replaced with “synthetic cannabis”.

Response to questions 1 and 2

As noted in our clarification email, the Ministry’s hospital data is coded using the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD). In respect of hospitalisations due to synthetic cannabis, these poisonings are coded to Poisoning by other psychotropic drugs, not elsewhere classified (code T43.8). Please note that while the majority of these events relate to “synthetic cannabis”, some may not. The number of public funded hospital discharges with the above primary diagnosis were:

2013/14 = 72 (8 aged 0-14)
2014/15 = 19 (2 aged 0-14)
2015/16 = 13 (0 aged 0-14)
2016/17 = 46 (3 aged 0-14)
2017/18 = 84 (4 aged 0-14)

Please also note that there is not a specific code in respect of mental or behavioural disorders for this category (analogous to F12 in respect of cannabis).

Response to question 3

This part of your request is refused under section 18(g) of the Act, as the information is not held by the Ministry.

For your information, data on psychoactive drugs from the 2012/13 NZHS can be found in the Drug Harm Report which the Ministry published here:

www.health.govt.nz/publication/research-report-new-zealand-drug-harm-index-2016

Response to questions 4 and 5

In respect of cannabis hospitalisations, the available codes are mental and behavioural disorders due to use of cannabis (code F12) and poisoning by cannabis (derivatives) (code T40.7). The number of public funded hospital discharges with the above primary diagnoses were:

F12 Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of cannabis

2013/14 = 364 (4 aged 0-14)

2014/15 = 329 (4 aged 0-14)

2015/16 = 330 (7 aged 0-14)

2016/17 = 390 (4 aged 0-14)

2017/18 = 432 (4 aged 0-14)

T40.7 Poisoning by cannabis (derivatives)

2013/14 = 63 (12 aged 0-14)

2014/15 = 84 (11 aged 0-14)

2015/16 = 74 (9 aged 0-14)

2016/17 = 73 (9 aged 0-14)

2017/18 = 79 (9 aged 0-14)

Response to question 6

The 2016/17 New Zealand Health Survey (NZHS) indicated that 11.6% of the adult population used cannabis in the 12 months prior to the survey.

For further and more detailed information about the survey, please refer to the Ministry's annual data explorer:

<https://minhealthnz.shinyapps.io/nz-health-survey-2016-17-annual-data-explorer/>

I trust this information fulfils your request. You have the right, under section 28 of the Act, to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request.

Please note this response (with your personal details removed) may be published on the Ministry's website.

Yours sincerely



Ann-Marie Cavanagh
**Acting Deputy Director-General
Data and Digital**