

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request for information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) on 2 April 2019 for:

*“How much money is spent on radiation therapy in New Zealand
The impact of hypofractionation on the current funding model
Number of Linear accelerators (Linac) machines in the last decade
How many of those Linacs were public/private
Cost/ cost effectiveness of radiation – cover balancing single centres vs
patient travel and access issues
Data on the health budget per capita and GDP
The health spend on Cancer per capita and GDP and on Radiation services per
capita and by GDP
Projections on the incidence of cancer
What factors are taken into account while projecting incidence of cancer?”*

I understand you have communicated with the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) in the past regarding these queries, and that information regarding linac machines, data on the health budget per capita, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) spending on cancer per capita, and projections on cancer incidence has either already been provided to you, or else you have been told where to access this information online.

Further information relating to your request is outlined below.

How much money is spent on radiation therapy in New Zealand

This information is not held by the Ministry, and this part of your request is therefore refused under section 18(g) of the Act. Due to the devolved funding model, individual District Health Boards (DHBs) are allocated a bulk fund and they make decisions around how much is allocated to radiation oncology services in their jurisdiction. Decisions like these are based on the needs of the local population within a particular DHB's jurisdiction.

The impact of hypofractionation on the current funding model

If by “current funding model” you mean the devolved funding model, there would be no effect because, as per the answer to your first question, DHBs are bulk-funded.

What factors are taken into account while projecting incidence of cancer?

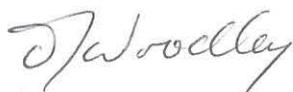
The Ministry takes into account projected overall DHB population increases and DHB age-group population changes, using data from Statistics New Zealand, when projecting incidences of cancer. Please note that these are unofficial projections. For more information, see the Statistics New Zealand website at the link below: <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/subnational-population-estimates-at-30-june-2018-final-nz-stat-tables>. Refer to the dataset ‘Subnational population estimates (DHB, DHB constituency)’ when using this link.

Cost/ cost effectiveness of radiation – cover balancing single centres vs patient travel and access issues

Please see the attached report titled “Economic evaluation of single-fraction versus multiple-fraction palliative radiotherapy for painful bone metastases in breast, lung and prostate cancer” by Lucie Collinson, Giorgi Kvizhinadze, Nisha Nair, Melissa McLeod and Tony Blakely.

I trust that 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.

Yours sincerely



Deborah Woodley
Deputy Director-General
Population Health and Prevention