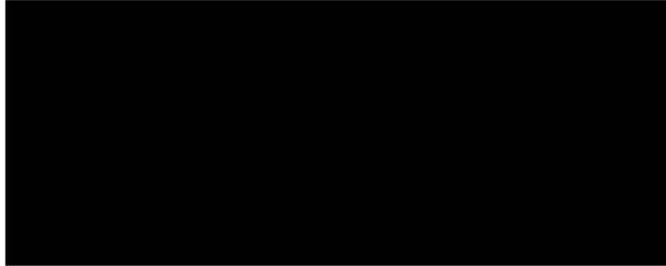


08 MAY 2019

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Response to your request for official information

I refer to your request of 8 April under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) for the following:

"I would like to request the following information about vaccines under the Official Information Act 1982:

- what is the cost per unit of each vaccine given in New Zealand?*
- is there an estimate of how much each incidence of vaccine-preventable illness costs the public health system in New Zealand (on average)?*
- what is the incidence rate of adverse reactions to vaccination in New Zealand?*
- does New Zealand keep a register of adverse reactions to vaccination? If so, how is an adverse reaction attributed to vaccines, and is this register publicly available?*
- what, if anything, is the Ministry of Health and/or Pharmac doing to counter vaccine-hesitancy in New Zealand?"*

In our view, it would have been necessary under section 14 of the Act to transfer the first two parts of your request to PHARMAC because we believe that the information you requested is held by that agency. However, we are aware that you have also sent your request to PHARMAC, and therefore we have not transferred it.

Incidence of adverse reactions to vaccines

Data on the incidence of adverse reactions is established through clinical trials for medicines, where all signs and symptoms are actively monitored and clinicians decide if the signs and symptoms are due to the vaccine. For example, the clinical trial for Priorix, the current Measles, Mumps and Rubella vaccination, involved approximately 12,000 subjects. The results of these trials and other spontaneous reporting can be found on the datasheet for each vaccine. Datasheets are publicly available on the Medsafe website. For example:

<https://medsafe.govt.nz/profs/Datasheet/p/Priorixvac.pdf>

Data on the national incidence of adverse reactions is not available. The Ministry of Health (the Ministry) contracts the collection of suspected adverse reaction reports to the New Zealand Pharmacovigilance Centre at the University of Otago. Healthcare professionals and consumers are encouraged to report any suspected adverse reaction to a medicine or vaccine to the Centre for Adverse Reactions Monitoring (CARM, part of the New Zealand

Pharmacovigilance Centre). Pharmaceutical companies also submit adverse reaction reports associated with the use of their products to CARM.

Register of adverse reactions to vaccines

Data on adverse reactions to vaccines and other medicines is available online. Healthcare professionals and consumers can report adverse reactions to CARM and have been able to do so since 1965. The Suspected Medicine Adverse Reaction Search on the Medsafe website includes high level data for reports received since 2000.

<https://medsafe.govt.nz/Projects/B1/ADRDisclaimer.asp>

There is also information on the Medsafe website about how the pharmacovigilance system for medicines including vaccines runs in New Zealand.

<https://medsafe.govt.nz/Consumers/Safety-of-Medicines/Medicines-Safety-and-Pharmacovigilance.asp>

Vaccine hesitancy

New Zealand's childhood immunisation rates have been relatively high in recent years, at over 90 percent. Those born in 1990s and early 2000s are less likely to be fully immunised than those born since 2005. Our current measles outbreaks in Canterbury and Auckland are primarily affecting teenagers and young adults as a result. Vaccine hesitancy is part of the reason people are not immunised, but access to primary health care and good reminder systems also play an important role. The Ministry is working hard with the health sector to ensure that as many New Zealanders as possible receive the protection provided by vaccines.

The Ministry has an ongoing communications work programme that supports and promotes the National Immunisation Schedule. Recently, this has included television and online advertising aimed at parents of young children. It also includes resources that address parents' common concerns about immunisation. You can view these on our website at www.health.govt.nz/immunisation and our YouTube channel www.youtube.com/minhealthnz

I trust this information fulfils your request. Please note that this letter, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry website.

Yours sincerely



Deborah Woodley
Deputy Director-General
Population Health and Prevention