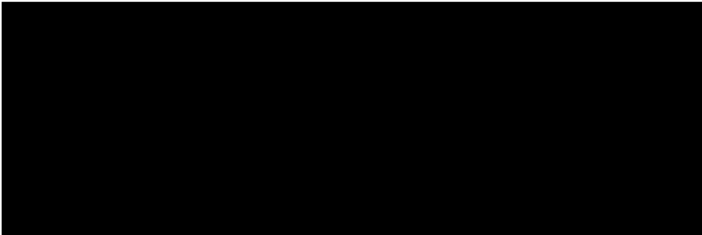


14 August 2019



Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request of 17 July 2019 under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) for:

“Just wanting to know the best estimate of the number of vaccine fatalities and serious injuries in NZ for 2018. Do you have a link to that data?”

Spontaneous suspected adverse reaction reports are case reports of suspected adverse reactions or adverse events that people have experienced while taking a medicine or vaccine. The Ministry of Health (the Ministry), through Medsafe, contracts the collection of this information to the New Zealand Pharmacovigilance Centre at the University of Otago, Dunedin.

Not all suspected reactions are caused by the medicine or vaccine. When these cases are reviewed, alternative causes, timing, and outcome are considered. The likelihood of experiencing an adverse reaction to a medicine or vaccine cannot be estimated from spontaneous reports as we cannot be certain if a person received a vaccine and the extent of under-reporting is unknown.

In 2018, the Centre for Adverse Reactions Monitoring (CARM) received a total of 1,473 suspected adverse reaction reports associated with vaccines. Of these, 52 (3.5%) suspected reports were considered serious by CARM. According to internationally agreed criteria, a potential adverse reaction is considered to be serious if the patient dies, their life is threatened, they are hospitalised, they have significant disability/incapacity, or if a baby is born with a congenital abnormality.

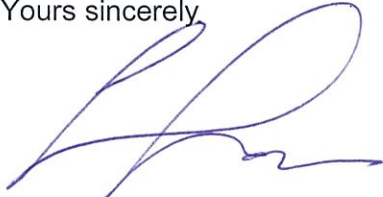
In 4 of the 5 suspected serious reports the patient died. CARM's review of the cases did not implicate the vaccine as the cause of death. Please note that for vaccines, a reaction such as fever in a child can be considered serious and non-serious, depending on a number of circumstances. For instance a child living in a rural area may be kept in hospital overnight as a precaution, whereas a child living closer to a hospital may be sent home.

As you were advised on 31 July 2019, your request for information on ‘serious injuries (due to vaccines)’ was partially transferred to the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC), under section 14 of the Act, as the Ministry does not hold this information. You can expect a response from ACC to this part of your request in due course.

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 Medsafe website.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris James', with a large loop at the end.

Chris James
Group Manager
Medsafe