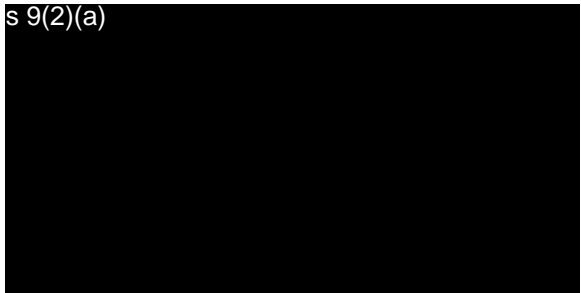


9 November 2020

s 9(2)(a)



Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) on 24 October 2020 to the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) for:

“1) is the covid response team that has been appointed by the NZ government aware they are pushing fake news of a pandemic?”

2) is the covid response team that has been appointed by the NZ government aware the PCR tests used to identify the ' COVID virus' are inaccurate ?

3) how many false positive PCR test results is the covid response team that has been appointed by the NZ government aware of ?”

Information in response to each part of your request are outlined below.

“1) is the covid response team that has been appointed by the NZ government aware they are pushing fake news of a pandemic?”

This part of your request asks the Ministry to form an opinion or comment rather than asking for information already known to and held by the Ministry. There is no requirement under the Act for the Ministry to create information.

“2) is the covid response team that has been appointed by the NZ government aware the PCR tests used to identify the ' COVID virus' are inaccurate?”

The SARS-CoV-2 RT-PCR tests used in New Zealand have very high specificities and the strategy of using a second and/or third SARS-CoV-2 polymerase chain reaction (PCR) assay with different gene targets increases the specificity of the PCR even further. All SARS-CoV-2 positive PCR test results are confirmed along with their clinical correlation, patient history, and any other information to determine infection status by public health.

“3) how many false positive PCR test results is the covid response team that has been appointed by the NZ government aware of?”

The Ministry does not hold any information regarding the amount of false positive PCR test results as it is not recorded or reported on. As such, this part of your request is refused under section 18(g) of the Act.

Internal Quality Assurance is a routine part of standard laboratory practice in the laboratories undertaking COVID-19 testing in New Zealand, all of which are International Accreditation New Zealand accredited. Quality Control measures provide assurance, for each and every batch of tests run, that the reported results are reliable.

Additionally, all laboratories participate in External Quality Assurance Programmes for COVID-19 testing which present an external, random challenge and allow labs to monitor how their results compare to those of other labs performing COVID-19 testing by the same or different methodology. Any variance in results would be investigated thoroughly, including review of patient results from the same run.

I trust 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.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry website.

Yours sincerely



Dr Kelvin Watson
Group Manager, COVID-19 Immunisation, Testing & Supply
COVID-19 Health System Response