

2 February 2021

[REDACTED]

By email: [REDACTED]
Ref: H202100145

Dear [REDACTED]

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) on 15 January 2021 for:

“Can you give me the details of the current test kits also. Also, certain people such as Siouxsie are keen to tell people the testing is highly accurate. So, can you tell me why Dr Bloomfield ordered a repeat test and a serum test for a child who tested positive in Japan, and totally denied the positive result.”

Details regarding the test platforms used in our accredited medical diagnostic laboratories performing SARS-CoV-2 RT-PCR can be found in the following weblinks:

- <https://diagnostics.roche.com/global/en/article-listing/general-information-cobas-sars-cov-2-coronavirus-test.html>
- <https://www.molecular.abbott/us/en/products/infectious-disease/RealTime-SARS-CoV-2-Assay>
- <https://www.hologic.com/coronavirus-test>
- <https://www.thermofisher.com/au/en/home/clinical/clinical-genomics/pathogen-detection-solutions/covid-19-sars-cov-2/multiplex.html>
- <https://www.dnature.co.nz/shop/dnature-kits/human/covid-19-sars-cov-2-multiplex-rt-qpcr-kit-500-reactions/>
- <https://mirxes.com/>

The polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test is accurate for identifying current COVID-19 infections, but it does not determine when an infection occurred. Careful assessment of PCR tests must be taken with people who have already had COVID-19 when they are re-tested as the virus can linger for months in the nose. Serology testing is helpful in determining new from old infections. If someone has a positive swab and a positive serology test it is most likely they are an old or historic case.

The Director-General ordered a PCR test and serology test be performed on the child as there were concerns that it was a ‘false positive.’ This was because the initial test used in Japan was a rapid saliva test, which is less reliable, and because none of the travel companions had tested

positive. A confirmation test and serology were therefore sought as it was considered that it may be a historical case given the information about the family the Ministry held.

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. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry website at: www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kel-Wat', is centered on a light-colored rectangular background.

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