

26 July 2021

s 9(2)(a)

Ref: H202109034

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Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) on 6 June 2021 for:

“...the total number of deaths within 28 days after being vaccinated against Covid 19...”

The Centre for Adverse Reactions Monitoring (CARM) at the University of Otago is contracted by the Ministry of Health to receive and review all adverse reactions linked to medications, including deaths. The Ministry is only aware of deaths if they are reported to CARM. While both health practitioners and members of the public can report a suspected adverse event to CARM it is important to note that reporting is voluntary. The form to report adverse reactions is publicly available at: <https://nzphvc.otago.ac.nz/reporting>.

A small number of deaths have been reported to CARM where a person subsequently died after receiving the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine. These cases have been reviewed by CARM and the Independent Safety Monitoring Board and no safety concerns relating to the vaccination have been identified. Weekly reports summarising the number and type of adverse events following immunisation (AEFI) reported with COVID-19 vaccines (including deaths) can be found on the Medsafe website here: : www.medsafe.govt.nz/COVID-19/vaccine-report-overview.asp

Of the reports received by Medsafe, all deaths occurred within a week of the most recent dose. It is important to note that as more than 30,000 people die in New Zealand every year, it is expected that some deaths will be reported after vaccination or use of any medicine. Similar reports are recorded during the influenza vaccination programme.

As the Comirnaty vaccine is approved for use in New Zealand for people 12 years and older, the Ministry expects to continue to see coincidental events, including deaths, following vaccination. Every event reported to CARM will be reviewed and any identified safety concerns will be publicly communicated as soon as possible, and appropriate action taken.

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 'Chris James', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Chris James
Group Manager
Medsafe