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7 November 2022

§ 9(2)(a)

By email: § 9(2)(a)  
Ref: H2022014725

Tēnā koe § 9(2)(a)

### Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to Manatū Hauora (the Ministry of Health) on 12 October 2022 for information regarding the Pfizer vaccine. You requested:

*“Please can you inform me if Jacinda Ardern or any Labour official, or anyone at the MOH knew that Pfizer had never tested for stopping Covid transmission.”*

While the Act allows people to ask for information from Ministers, government agencies and Crown entities, there is no obligation under the Act for agencies to create new information, compile information they do not hold, provide, or prove an opinion, or respond to inflammatory statements or hypothetical questions. The Act also does not support requests where statements are put to agency for comment, couched as a request for official information.

Information collated by Manatū Hauora about transmission is available on our website on the COVID-19 Science news webpage here: [www.health.govt.nz/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-resources-and-tools/covid-19-science-news#variants](http://www.health.govt.nz/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-resources-and-tools/covid-19-science-news#variants).

In general (not COVID-19-specific), there are two mechanisms through which vaccines can potentially reduce transmission:

1. Preventing infection of the vaccinated person (if a person is uninfected, they cannot transmit the virus). This is measured in vaccine efficacy/effectiveness against infection.
2. Reducing the number of onward infections (if the vaccinated person does become infected). This is measured by assessing the reduction in the number of transmissions to contacts of infected individuals.

These two methods combine to provide a larger effect than either of them in isolation.

For the Pfizer vaccine, there is a substantial body available about its ability to reduce the number of infections (and the subsequent effect on transmission through reduction of infection). These data have been monitored by Manatū Hauora and are publicly available on our website on the COVID-19 Science news webpage.

Although vaccine effectiveness against infection reduces overtime, an effect does persist for a period after vaccination (for example it is estimated 50 per cent of infections are prevented at


around four months after vaccination for individuals aged 18 to 59 years). Effects on onward transmissions (that is, the ability of a vaccinated person to transmit on to other people) substantially more challenging to measure (and the results harder to interpret) there are far fewer studies. The limited data that are available for Omicron on onward transmission after infection (all vaccines, not limited to Pfizer) is also available on our website on the COVID-19 Science news webpage

It should be noted that data for vaccine effectiveness (against infection and onward transmission) for variants prior to Omicron have been monitored since trial data were first released by Pfizer in 2020. Vaccine effectiveness against infection was generally higher for previous variants than for Omicron.

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](mailto: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 Manatū Hauora website at: [www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests](http://www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests).

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dave Henderson', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Dave Henderson  
**Group Leader, Intelligence, Surveillance and Knowledge  
Public Health Agency, Ministry of Health**