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8 December 2022

§ 9(2)(a)

By email: § 9(2)(a)
Ref: H2022016629

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 10 November 2022 for information regarding a lung cancer study in Italy. You requested:

*“Has there been any similar serologic studies done in New Zealand?
If yes, can I have the results please.
If no studies have been done, why haven’t they?”*

The prospective lung cancer study you refer to from Italy was specific to SARS-CoV-2 antibodies. Manatū Hauora has not undertaken any COVID-19 seroprevalence studies in Aotearoa. However, this is under active consideration. It is acknowledged that population-based serosurveys are considered a valuable tool in estimating the proportion of the population previously infected with COVID-19. Monitoring population immunity of Aotearoa New Zealand will likely increase the reliability of our estimate of population-level immunity, over and above our COVID-19 vaccination coverage.

Seroprevalence is just one part of New Zealand’s approach to COVID-19 surveillance as outlined in our strategy of December 2021. More information about the COVID-19 Surveillance Strategy is publicly available at: www.tewhatauora.govt.nz/for-the-health-sector/covid-19-information-for-health-professionals/covid-19-surveillance-strategy#:~:text=The%20goal%20of%20the%20surveillance%20strategy&text=Effective%20COVID%2D19%20surveillance%20gives,detect%20and%20respond%20to%20cases. Manatū Hauora is aware that since December 2021, the COVID-19 settings at the border, community, and the international context has shifted substantially.

Planning is underway jointly between health agencies to estimate the percentage of the population with antibodies to SARS-CoV-2, which will indicate population level immunity to COVID-19 infection. At this stage, the approach is yet to be confirmed.

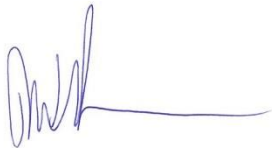
In terms of non-COVID-19 specific serological surveys, Manatū Hauora are aware of two seroprevalence surveys:

- The national serosurvey of vaccine preventable diseases published in 2009, which can be found here: <https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/national-serosurvey-of-vaccine-preventable-diseases-may09.pdf>
- Measles and rubella survey in 2014-15 within the National Health Survey, which can be found here: www.health.govt.nz/publication/biomedical-results-2014-15-new-zealand-health-survey.

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 Manatū Hauora website at: www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests.

Nāku noa, nā



Dave Henderson

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