



133 Molesworth Street
PO Box 5013
Wellington 6140
New Zealand
T+64 4 496 2000

19 December 2022

s 9(2)(a)

By email: s 9(2)(a)
Ref: H2022017235

Tēnā koe s 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 21 November 2022 for information regarding Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS). Each part of your request is responded to below.

Does the Ministry of Health – and specifically its Mental Health and Addictions division - consider Myalgic Encephalomyelitis / Chronic Fatigue Syndrome to be a mental health condition?

Does the Ministry of Health consider that there is a primary psychological basis underlying the development and/or maintenance of Myalgic Encephalomyelitis / Chronic Fatigue Syndrome?

The Mental Health and Addictions group at Manatū Hauora is guided by international evidence such as that cited in this information request. We support conclusions that Myalgic Encephalomyelitis / Chronic Fatigue Syndrome is a serious and complex medical condition with varying severity rather than a mental health condition and that there is not a primary psychological basis underlying its development and/or maintenance.

Does the Ministry of Health acknowledge the findings of the 2021 NICE Guidelines NG206 that Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) should not be offered as a curative treatment for Myalgic Encephalomyelitis / Chronic Fatigue Syndrome?

Does the Ministry of Health acknowledge the recommendation of the 2021 NICE Guidelines NG206 that the Lightning Process should not be offered to people with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis / Chronic Fatigue Syndrome?

We note the findings against Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and Lightning Process in the NICE guidelines.

Does the Ministry of Health acknowledge the conclusions reached by the USA's Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the USA's National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the UK's National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE),

that Myalgic Encephalomyelitis / Chronic Fatigue Syndrome is a serious and complex medical condition/disease?

There is no formal acknowledgement by Manatū Hauora on the conclusions reached by the United States of America's Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the United States of America's National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the United Kingdom's National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). The conclusions were that ME/CFS is a serious and complex medical condition/disease. We acknowledge with respect the robust process these agencies undertake to evaluate evidence ahead of providing conclusions.

Does the Ministry of Health acknowledge the current edition of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) where Myalgic Encephalomyelitis and/or Chronic Fatigue Syndrome are included under "Diseases of the nervous system" (Chapter 8), and are coded to 8E49 Post-viral Fatigue Syndrome.

Clinical coding standards in New Zealand use the ICD-10-AM classification, which is the Australian Modification of the WHO ICD-10. In ICD-10-AM, ME and/or CFS are classified to ICD-10-AM diagnosis code G93.3, 'Post viral fatigue syndrome' (this includes the term 'Myalgic encephalomyelitis'), which is from Chapter 6 'Diseases of the Nervous System' (G00-G99). This information is available online at www.icd.who.int/browse10/2019/en#/G90-G99.

What role, if any, does the Ministry of Health see for the use of psychological therapies in the treatment and/or management of Myalgic Encephalomyelitis /Chronic Fatigue Syndrome?

ME/CFS is a serious and complex medical condition with varying severity. There is no single approach which can offer full management of the condition. As such, a comprehensive treatment plan is crucial for the care, support, and treatment for people with ME/CFS.

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



Arran Culver
Associate Deputy Director-General
Mental Health and Addiction
System Performance Monitoring | Te Pou Mahi Pūnaha