

25 August 2023

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Tēnā koe Katharina

Official information request HN200025556

Thank you for your email on 13 July 2023, asking for the following which has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

"I am reaching out to make a request based on the Freedom of Information Act. I would like to request the following data points stratified by date, age group and sex for the time period 2010-2022.

- *Number of patients hospitalised with Flu, and separately RSV (date [month], age group, sex)*
- *Number of patients occupying ICU with Flu, and separately RSV (date [month], age group, sex)*
- *Total number of deaths in the country due to infection with Flu, and separately RSV (date [month], age group, sex)"*

Please see outlined below a response to each part of your request.

- *Number of patients hospitalised with Flu, and separately RSV (date [month], age group, sex)*
- *Number of patients occupying ICU with Flu, and separately RSV (date [month], age group, sex)*

Please see attached in **Appendix 1**. Te Whatu Ora can provide the number of patients who had influenza who were discharged from public hospitals between 2010 and 2022 both in the general wards and the intensive care unit (ICU). However, there is not a diagnosis code specific to respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). There is a secondary cause code for RSV, but we cannot assume that RSV caused the hospitalisation. Te Whatu Ora therefore cannot state how many people were hospitalised or died from RSV.

- *Total number of deaths in the country due to infection with Flu, and separately RSV (date [month], age group, sex)"*

Please see attached in **Appendix 2**. Deaths due to influenza by year and sex between 2010 and 2018.

You will note that the the data broken down by month and age group have been withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act in order to protect their privacy. The need to protect the privacy of these individuals is not outweighed by the public interest in the release of this information.

As above, Te Whatu Ora cannot state how many people died from RSV.

2018 is the latest year for which complete cause of death data is available. After the close of a calendar year, there is a 12-18 month process to assign cause of death codes to the majority of deaths in that year. Te Whatu Ora's clinical coding team reviews the death certificate and health history of the deceased, to assign cause of death codes. Approximately 10% of deaths are referred

to the coroner each year to determine cause. Deaths which requires a coronial inquiry can take 2-3 or more years for cause of death to be assigned. Te Whatu Ora do not make mortality data available publicly until the majority of deaths have been assigned a cause of death, so that the data we release is complete and accurate. The Chief Coroner has noted delays in the time it is taking them to assign cause of death codes.

How to get in touch

If you have any questions, you can contact us at h.nzOIA@health.govt.nz.

If you are not happy with this response, you have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman. Information about how to do this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by phoning 0800 802 602.

As this information may be of interest to other members of the public, Te Whatu Ora may proactively release a copy of this response on our website. All requester data, including your name and contact details, will be removed prior to release.

Nāku iti noa, nā



Gaynor Bradfield
Manager
Office of the Chief Data and Digital