

3 April 2024

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Tēnā koe 9(2)(a)

Your request for official information, reference: HNZ00038000

Thank you for your email on 30 January 2024, asking Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora for the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

I'm not sure how she phrased her query but, basically, I wonder if you can please tell me how many reported incidents there were in security departments in December and how that compares with October and November 2023 and December 2022.

Can you please include any break downs you record in terms of the type of incident.

Response

Hospitals can be challenging environments where patients are sometimes cognitively impaired, impacted by some form of substance or alcohol abuse, or coping with the initial impact of an acute injury. This can often affect their judgment and demeanour, resulting in unpredictable behaviour. We cannot prevent all of these issues from occurring but have robust processes in place to manage them – minimising the risk of harm to staff and preventing further escalation. For this reason, we have focussed our control measures on reducing the consequences by, for example, providing staff with personal alarms and appropriate training. Our security teams are in close proximity to our EDs and trained to help de-escalate incidents of aggression, if required.

Each month, around 94% to 98% of aggression incidents are deemed to be without intent, i.e. the aggressor is unaware of their actions, or the consequence of those actions, at the time of the incident. It is also important to recognise that, of all of the thousands of patients that we assess and treat each month, very few result in any violent interaction.

We have located the following information in response to your request, which we have broken down by physical assault and verbal abuse.

	2022			2023		
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Oct	Nov	Dec
Reported Physical Assaults on Staff in ED	18	52	26	26	34	34
Reported Verbal Abuse in ED	49	136	93	72	126	114
Overall Reported Aggression Incidents in ED	67	188	119	98	160	148

We would like to offer context regarding the total number of emergency department presentations over the same periods. This has been given further context with a rate per 10,000 presentations. This data follows.

	2022			2023		
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Oct	Nov	Dec
ED Presentations	113,783	112,179	117,537	117,973	114,774	121,000
Physical Assaults Reported in ED per 10000 ED presentations	1.6	4.6	2.2	2.2	3.0	2.8
Verbal Abuse Reports in ED per 10000 ED presentations	4.3	12.1	7.9	6.1	11.0	9.4
Overall Aggression Reports in ED per 10000 ED presentations	5.9	16.8	10.1	8.3	13.9	12.2

How to get in touch

If you have any questions, you can contact us at h.nzOIA@tewhatauora.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, Health NZ 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



Sue Gordon

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Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
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