

23 AUG 2019

Ms Belinda Hodson  
fyi-request-10857-9bd00484@requests.fyi.org.nz

Ref: H201907018

Dear Ms Hodson

### **Response to your request for official information**

Thank you for your request for information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) on 31 July 2019:

*“As at 31st March, please provide:*

*1. Guidelines and/or policy on thyroid diagnosis, testing and treatment issued/used/supported by the Ministry of Health; plus*

*a) The citation list (clinical research studies, other clinical papers and publications including randomised control trials and guidelines) that support these guidelines/policy. Citations are to include those on safety, benefits, efficacy, risk, and risk management; and*

*b). The citation list of all patient survey data that supports these guidelines/policy.*

*2. From the period 1 January 1990 through to 31 March 2019, all studies carried out by the Ministry of Health, referred to or sourced by the Ministry of Health (NZ or international studies) that:*

*a) Monitor the impact of*

*[https://scanmail.trustwave.com/?c=15517&d=yJ7B3Tq\\_KhdVIQpV03pYBm1DcPCaYX712LYEkQK\\_nw&u=https%3a%2f%2fbpac%2eorg%2enz%2f](https://scanmail.trustwave.com/?c=15517&d=yJ7B3Tq_KhdVIQpV03pYBm1DcPCaYX712LYEkQK_nw&u=https%3a%2f%2fbpac%2eorg%2enz%2f) and*

*[https://scanmail.trustwave.com/?c=15517&d=yJ7B3Tq\\_KhdVIQpV03pYBm1DcPCaYX712ORVxgbgww&u=https%3a%2f%2fwww%2eracp%2eedu%2eau%2f](https://scanmail.trustwave.com/?c=15517&d=yJ7B3Tq_KhdVIQpV03pYBm1DcPCaYX712ORVxgbgww&u=https%3a%2f%2fwww%2eracp%2eedu%2eau%2f)*

*guidelines/policies on thyroid diagnosis, testing and treatment on the health and well-being of NZ thyroid patients; and*

*b) All studies examining thyroid patients' experience of diagnosis and treatment.*

*3. The Ministry of Health's rationale to exclude statistics on thyroid disease from its website at: <https://www.health.govt.nz/nz-health-statistics/health-statistics-and-data-sets>. NZ's population of thyroid patients has been steadily rising since 2010 and the number of patients on funded medications was 109,252 as at 31 March 2017 as recorded by the Ministry of Health. This is before >10,000 patients are added to this total (data captured from another source). Or, if data and statistics are on the website, please advise where on the Ministry's website this data can be viewed.”*

Part one of your request is refused in full under section 18(e) of the Act, as this information does not exist. The Ministry is the steward of the health sector and responsible for strategic health policy. We do not generally develop guidelines and policies for diagnosis, testing and treatment, this is the role of the district health boards (DHBs). You may be interested to contact individual DHBs for the information they hold on thyroid diagnosis, testing, and treatment.

Part two of your request is refused in full under section 18(g) of the Act, as the Ministry does not hold this information and has no grounds for believing that the information is held by another department or Minister of the Crown or organisation. The Ministry does not carry out studies or research, this is the role of the Health Research Council of New Zealand (HRC). You may be interested to contact the HRC for the information they hold.

In response to part three of your request, the most recent data and statistics are available on the Ministry website in spreadsheets that can be publicly downloaded. The relevant International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD) codes used are E00-E07 *Disorders of thyroid gland* and C73 *Malignant neoplasm of thyroid gland*.

Data for the number of hospitalisations by primary diagnosis (i.e. the reason for the hospitalisation) is available on the Ministry website:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/publication/publicly-funded-hospital-discharges-1-july-2015-30-june-2016>

Data for the number of deaths by underlying cause of death is available on the Ministry website:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/publication/mortality-2016-data-tables>

Cancer of the thyroid is included in the cancer registration data available on the Ministry website: <https://www.health.govt.nz/publication/new-cancer-registrations-2016>

I trust that 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.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry website.

Yours sincerely



Dr Andrew Simpson  
**Chief Medical Officer**