

H20_21-46/OIA 2020-051

4 May 2020

Amy S Van Wey Lovatt

Email: fyi-request-12520-938bfc1d@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Ms Lovatt

Thank you for your request dated 23 March 2020 requesting information under the Official Information Act 1982, regarding *Best practice protocol for the archiving, storage or biobanking of human tissue*. You requested:

1. *A copy of the your DHB's best practice protocol for the archiving, storage, or biobanking of human tissue for diagnostic purposes, whether they are formalin fixed, paraffin embedded or pathology slides, and the standards, legislation or scientific evidence which provides the basis for your DHB's protocol.*
2. *Is your DHB protocol for the archiving, storage, or biobanking of human tissue for diagnostic purposes, whether they are formalin fixed, paraffin embedded or pathology slides, based on a universally adopted standard within NZ or has your DHB determined its own policy.*
3. *Please explain the potential hazards of leaving formalin fixed, paraffin embedded or pathology slides in an unsecure, non-temperature and non-humidity regulated environment for 2 months over a NZ summer: say a on an employee's desk which is open to the public and in a repurposed house adjacent to the hospital from mid-December to late February.*
4. *Please provide me with the name of the independent agency or agencies which provides oversight for your medical laboratory.*

This is a combined response from Capital & Coast and Hutt Valley District Health Boards. All 3DHBs have contracted WSCL to perform laboratory services. The information pertaining to your request is below.

Question 1

I am writing to request a copy of the CCDHB best practice protocol for the archiving, storage, or biobanking of human tissue for diagnostic purposes, whether they are formalin fixed, paraffin embedded or pathology slides, and the standards, legislation or scientific evidence which provides the basis for the CCDHB protocol.

Answer:

Capital & Coast District Health Board (along with Hutt Valley and Wairarapa Health Boards) have contracted their laboratory services to WSCL. The laboratories policies around storage of human tissues are based on the NPACC guidelines, in particular Table 2:

[https://urldefense.com/v3/https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/B8562E2C3D131ED8CA257BF00019153C/\\$File/20180612*20-*20Final*20-*20Retention.pdf](https://urldefense.com/v3/https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/B8562E2C3D131ED8CA257BF00019153C/$File/20180612*20-*20Final*20-*20Retention.pdf) ;JSUIJQ!!A3teau8g8Q!HZwIEEQAgGTeKS9U1kre0ZKItLkWYKy5ICefB0Iie3VMOZqoUWB8UmF5-njxRHIFvcgrCQ\$

This indicates storage should be for at least 10 years. WSCL's policy is to store slides and blocks for 25 years.

Question 2

Is the CCDHB best practice protocol for the archiving, storage, or biobanking of human tissue for diagnostic purposes, whether they are formalin fixed, paraffin embedded or pathology slides, is a standard which is universally adopted by all NZ DHB's and medical laboratories, or does each DHB or medical laboratory determine their own best practice?

Answer:

IANZ (see question 4) who accredit clinical laboratories in New Zealand point to the NPACC standard (refer to link above) as the minimum document.

Question 3

Please explain the potential hazards of leaving formalin fixed, paraffin embedded or pathology slides in an unsecure, non-temperature regulated environment (say a on an employee's desk outside of the laboratory) for 2 months.

Answer:

WSCL advise that given their laboratory practice such a breach should not occur. Hence WSCL and the DHBs have no comment.

Question 4

Please provide me with the name of the independent agency or agencies which provides oversight for medical laboratories in NZ?

Answer:

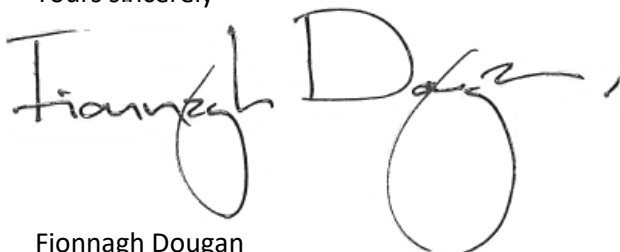
IANZ (International accreditation New Zealand) accredit New Zealand clinical laboratories under ISO-15189.

Please note that due to staff redeployment and our current response to Covid-19 we are experiencing delays in responding to your request and apologise sincerely.

I trust this information fulfils your request.

You have the right to seek a review, under section 28(3) of the Act, by way of a complaint to the Ombudsman.

Yours sincerely



Fionnagh Dougan
Chief Executive
Capital & Coast and Hutt Valley District Health Boards