

Ryan Potts

By email: fyi-request-12586-2fe16764@requests.fyi.org.nz  
Ref: H202002135

Dear Mr Potts

### Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) on 8 April 2020 for:

*"The number of reported deaths in the period January-March 2020 of which the underlying cause was influenza or pneumonia.*

*The average number of deaths by influenza/pneumonia in January-March over the previous five years."*

I am unable to answer part one of your request under section 18(g) of the Act, as the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) does not yet hold this information and does not believe that another agency would hold this.

In response to part two of your request, I have outlined the previous five years of data available (2012-2016). The Ministry's mortality data is coded using the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD).

The number of deaths with an underlying cause of death of influenza or pneumonia (ICD-10 codes J09-J18) registered in those years where the death occurred in January-March was:

**Table 1. Number of Deaths ICD-10 Codes J09-J18 (January – March)**

Year	Number of Deaths
2012	124
2013	114
2014	96
2015	125
2016	110

If you have any further interest in this data, the Ministry publishes mortality data online here: <https://www.health.govt.nz/nz-health-statistics/health-statistics-and-data-sets/mortality-data-and-stats>

There are over 30,000 deaths recorded in New Zealand every year. The Ministry releases official figures on cause of death once there is a recorded cause for the majority of these deaths. This is to ensure the Ministry does not misrepresent the situation. This sometimes

takes several years to complete as coroners often conduct extensive inquiries before rendering their verdict.

Under section 28 of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any of my decisions made in relation to your request for information.

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

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Gaynor Bradfield  
**Manager, Office of the Deputy-Director General  
Data and Digital**