

Tania Marinkovich

By email: fyi-request-14962-e091e5ca@requests.fyi.org.nz
Ref: H202103248

Dear Tania Marinkovich

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) on 22 March 2021 for:

"It has been stated on your website that the Pfizer vaccination will not stop you from getting covid 19 so firstly why the mass vaccinations? I would like full scientific information on what will occur through an experimental mass vaccination"

The evidence on the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine from the clinical trials conducted as part of vaccine development shows that most vaccinated people will be protected against the symptoms of COVID-19. This is important to both the individual and their family as well as the whole of New Zealand. COVID-19 can lead to serious illness, including possible hospital admission and death. Vaccination has a key benefit for individual New Zealanders in reducing the severity of the disease and also in reducing the risk of death from if they contract COVID-19.

A vaccine against COVID-19 can also reduce transmission of the virus between people but this is harder to investigate in clinical trials. However, reducing the severity of the virus through medical treatment if someone does contract COVID-19 can also help to reduce transmission. Reducing the severity of the virus can shorten the duration of the infectious period, as well as the amount of virus the person may 'shed' and spread to others.

Recent data from Israel – a country which has a lot of COVID-19 cases and where the Pfizer vaccine has now been rolled out to a large number of people – has confirmed in a 'real world' setting that vaccination has reduced the severity of the disease and number of deaths. It has also shown that transmission of the virus has been reduced.

Specific data from the clinical trial of the vaccine and from a study of the vaccine in a 'real world' setting can be found here:

- www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa2034577.
- www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa2101765.

An article that was recently written for Ministry and the government about what the data on vaccines tells us is also attached to this letter as Document 1.

Vaccination is the best defence we now have to protect New Zealanders against COVID-19 and it will be available for everyone over 16 years of age. However, it remains an individual choice to be vaccinated.

I trust 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. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry website at: www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests.

Yours sincerely



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