

19 November 2021

Clem White

By email: [fyi-request-17290-4755b64f@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-17290-4755b64f@requests.fyi.org.nz)  
Ref: H202115559

Dear Clem

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

Thank you for your follow up request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) on 5 November 2021. Please find a response to your request below.

*This doesn't exactly supply what I asked for, which was the actual workings that were used to derive these figures, so something like the spreadsheet or relevant files for whatever statistical package was used for the calculations would have been expected.*

We are not able to provide this 'backend' information because it contains identifiable information about individuals. An overview of the calculations can be found in the links at: <https://medsafe.govt.nz/COVID-19/safety-report-32.asp#analysis>.

*However in lieu of this, some explanation of why these figures are so clearly flawed yet still used as if they represent something meaningful would be acceptable. It is unmissable that there is problem with the figures for the observed deaths, which for dose 1 are a fraction of the expected deaths in each age category except 80+ (which is still well below), and just over half the expected deaths overall. I realise that rates will fluctuate over time, but this amount of consistent variation from what is expected does not seem remotely plausible. Has any statistical analysis been done to determine the chances of the death rate in every age group being so dramatically lower than what would be expected for any randomly selected time period? The fact that the same phenomena can be observed in every report further exacerbates the unlikeliness.*

People that are extremely unwell do not get the vaccine and therefore, we expect the death rates in the 21 days after vaccination to be lower than average.

*Therefore it would seem that either there is a problem with the calculations, or not all deaths in the vaccinated population have been recorded during the monitoring period. Either scenario would appear to render entirely meaningless the claim that "the observed number of deaths reported after vaccination is actually less than the expected number of natural deaths.*

*Is it really the case that no one from MedSafe or MoH looked at relative risk in the range 0.28 - 0.85 and concluded that something must be going on to render these figures unreliable or misleading?*

In response to this part of your request it is important to note that the Act allows people to ask for information. It does not require the Ministry to create new information, compile information it does not hold, or in the case of this part of your request, to provide or prove an opinion. The Act does not support requests where a comment or a hypothetical statement is put to it and the Ministry is asked to comment on it, couched as a request for official information. This part of your request is

therefore refused under section 18(g) of the Act as the information is not held by Medsafe nor the wider Ministry and there are no grounds for believing it is held by another agency subject to the Act.

*There is also the matter that Victor raised in his annotation, which is that the table columns consistently do not add up to the totals. I realise that it's possible this could be explained with the note "Some cells could not be calculated because the numbers were too low (<6)" - but this doesn't appear to make sense. If there were say 5 deaths in a particular age group for example, why could the number 5 not just be put in that column?*

*I look forward to receiving further clarification on this issue. I appreciate that this is a busy time for all involved and value any efforts made to provide this information, but also think it is worthwhile as this data is essential for maintaining confidence in the vaccination program.*

We avoid reporting on numbers below six to preserve the privacy of natural persons. In this case, it would add no additional information because the statistical analysis would be inconclusive due to the low count.

As previously advised, 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](mailto:info@ombudsman.parliament.nz) or by calling 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Chris James  
**Group Manager**  
**Medsafe**