

21 NOV 2018

Mr Miles Stratford  
fyi-request-8956-1e0d0096@requests.fyi.org.nz

Ref: H201807260

Dear Mr Stratford

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

I refer to your email of 29 October 2018 to the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) requesting under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

*"1/ In an email to the undersigned of 10th of September, Stewart Jessamine advised the following in respect of the relative risks presented to by lead paint, mould and dampness when compared to methamphetamine residues in property:*

*"The Ministry concurs with Sir Peter's assessment that, in terms of risk of harm to health, the presence of lead paint, mould or dampness pose significantly greater threats to health than presence of methamphetamine on surfaces where the premise has not been used as a laboratory to manufacture methamphetamine."*

*Please provide details of the comparative studies and information that allows the Ministry to reach this conclusion.*

*2/ Methamphetamine is known to have adverse side effects to the health of users. These effects can include damage to the heart, kidneys, circulatory systems and nervous system.*

*Please provide details of the research conducted/data collected by the Ministry of Health from those patients presenting with compromised health in respect of their heart, kidneys, circulatory and nervous systems, which shows the impact of current and/or historic use of methamphetamine on the health impacts these patients are presenting with."*

The Ministry does not have any comparative studies to determine which poses a greater risk between methamphetamine, lead and mould. I refuse part 1 of your request pursuant to section 18(e) of the Act as the document requested does not exist. The risks of cold, damp and mouldy housing is perceived by the Ministry as a more significant public health threat, as these can worsen asthma symptoms, and increased risk of developing respiratory tract infections.

In 2011, the World Health Organization (WHO) released a guide quantifying the health effects of inadequate housing and convened an international working group to quantify the health impacts of selected housing risk factors. The guide confirms that housing is a significant public health issue. This document can be found at:

[http://www.euro.who.int/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/142077/e95004.pdf?ua=1](http://www.euro.who.int/data/assets/pdf_file/0003/142077/e95004.pdf?ua=1)

The Ministry has not commissioned any research using New Zealanders' patient data that will show the impact of current or historic use of methamphetamine. Therefore, I refuse part 2 of your request pursuant to section 18(e) of the Act as the document requested does not exist.

You have the right, under section 28 of the Act, to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request.

Please note that the Ministry intends to publish this response and any attachments on the Ministry of Health website, with your personal details removed.

Yours sincerely



Dr William Rainger  
**Acting Deputy Director-General  
Population Health and Prevention**