

17 December 2018

C102552

Jessica Lim
fyi-request-91110-f61525a9@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Ms Lim

Thank you for your email of 23 November 2018, requesting information about prisoners' medical care and drug use. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

You have requested:

*How many prisoners are regularly taking psychotropic drugs?
How many prisoners are regularly taking anti-inflammatory drugs?
How many prisoners are regularly taking opioids or painkillers?*

Corrections has the responsibility of managing around 40,000 prisoners and community-based offenders, to ensure that they comply with sentences and orders imposed by the Courts and the New Zealand Parole Board.

Corrections has a statutory obligation under the Corrections Act 2004 to provide a primary health service to prisoners reasonably equivalent to that found in the community. This service is provided within prison health centres by over 200 full time equivalent registered nurses. Specialised medical professionals including Medical Officers and Dentists are contracted to provide basic and necessary services. Every prisoner entering prison has their health needs assessed when they arrive, and on-going care and treatment is given if required.

The Ministry of Health (or ACC) is responsible for funding and administering secondary health and tertiary health care services for prisoners. Secondary and tertiary health care refers to specialist and hospital services. Prisoners are referred to secondary or tertiary health care services on the same basis as any person in the community.

Information about prisoners' health needs, including any diagnosed medical conditions or prescribed medicines, are noted on each prisoner's individual electronic health record. The details you have requested are not centrally collated, or held in any reportable format. Corrections currently manages around 10,000 prisoners, and in the last year alone approximately 24,000 prisoners went through our prison system.

Consequently, Corrections does not hold figures on how many prisoners are currently prescribed psychotropic or anti-inflammatory drugs, or painkillers. To provide this information would instead require Corrections to manually review each individual file, and initiate a project to extract, analyse and present the data in the form requested.

In accordance with the OIA, we have considered whether to affix a charge or extend the time limit for responding. However, given the scale of the request we do not consider that this would be an appropriate use of our publicly funded resources.

Therefore, your request is declined under section 18(f) of the OIA, as the information cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

I trust the information provided is of assistance. Should you have any concerns with this response, I would encourage you to raise these with the Department. Alternatively you are advised of your right to also raise any concerns with the Office of the Ombudsman. Contact details are: Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Yours sincerely



Gillon Carruthers
General Manager Public Affairs
Corporate Services