



**Hospital Services**

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28 January 2021

[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

**Re: OIA request – MDMA-related hospital admissions**

Thank you for your Official Information Act request received 15 January 2021 seeking information about MDMA admissions from Waitematā District Health Board (DHB).

Before responding to your specific questions, it may be useful to provide some context about our services.

Waitematā is the largest and one of the most rapidly growing DHBs in the country, serving a population of around 650,000 across the North Shore, Waitakere and Rodney areas. We are the largest employer in the district, employing around 8,500 people across more than 80 locations.

In addition to providing services to our own population, we are also the metropolitan Auckland provider of forensic psychiatry, child disability services, child community dental services and community alcohol and drug services.

You requested the following information:

***I am requesting the following information under the Official Information Act 1982 regarding patients being admitted into Waitematā District Health Board for MDMA-related use.***

- 1. Please provide a monthly breakdown of the number of people treated at Waitematā District Health Board from 2016 to 2021 to date (including through the COVID-19 period) for MDMA-related admissions. Can you please break it down by age groups of those treated and ethnicity.***
- 2. Please provide a monthly breakdown of the number of people admitted to Waitematā District Health Board from 2016 to 2021 to date (including through the COVID-19 period) for MDMA-related harm. Eg for those who have injured themselves with MDMA in their system. Can you please break it down by age groups of those admitted and ethnicity?***
- 3. Please provide a monthly breakdown of patients admitted to Waitematā District Health Board from 2016 to 2021 to date (Including through the COVID-19 period) for consuming substances disguised as MDMA e.g. Synthetic Cathinones.***
- 4. Please provide a monthly breakdown of the number of people who have died from MDMA related harm at Waitematā District Health Board from 2016 to 2021 to date (including through the COVID-19 period).***
- 5. Please provide a monthly breakdown of the cost for each person who was treated at Waitematā District Health Board from 2016 to 2021 to date (including through the COVID-19 period) for MDMA use.***

We do not always test for specific drugs, such as MDMA or MDMA-synthetics, when a patient presents at one of our Emergency Departments at either North Shore or Waitakere hospitals.

A clinical assessment may be made to determine if the patient has ingested a recreational drug, which may be noted in a patient's individual clinical file, but this information is not captured in our clinical coding.

A patient's clinical record will state that the person has features consistent with a toxicological cause for their symptoms. However, the record will not consistently show what the specific recreational drug may be or may have been.

We are, therefore, refusing your request under Sections 18(e) and 18(f) of the Official Information Act 1982 as the information requested either does not exist or, where it does exist, is held in the individual clinical records of patients.

Due to the sensitivity of this information, frontline clinical staff would need to review individual clinical files and it would not be appropriate to use a contractor to review the records. This would take the frontline staff away from their clinical work and prejudice our ability to provide core clinical services.

We have considered whether charging or extending the timeframe for responding to this aspect of your request would assist us in managing this work and have concluded it would not. We have, therefore, determined to refuse this element of your request under Section 18(f) of the Official Information Act due to substantial collation and research.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to seek a review is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

I trust that this information is helpful.

Waitematā DHB supports the open disclosure of information to assist community understanding of how we are delivering publicly funded healthcare. This includes the proactive publication of anonymised Official Information Act responses on our website from 10 working days after they have been released.

If you consider there are good reasons why this response should not be made publicly available, we will be happy to consider your views.

Yours sincerely



**Executive Director Hospital Services  
Waitematā District Health Board**