



17 November 2020

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

RE: OIA request – Retained surgical equipment

Thank you for your Official Information Act request received 3 November 2020 seeking information from Waitematā District Health Board (DHB).

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

Waitematā DHB serves a population of more than 630,000 across the North Shore, Waitakere and Rodney areas, the largest and one of the most rapidly growing DHBs in the country. 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:

The number of formal complaints about surgical equipment mistakenly being left behind in patients in the last three years, which went to the Health and Disability Commissioner (HDC) or resulted in a review of hospital policy.

North Shore and Waitakere hospitals have undertaken more than 23,000 planned elective surgical procedures and more than 13,000 acute surgical procedures each year, on average, over the past three years.

Over this time, Waitematā DHB has had only one formal complaint lodged with the HDC, involving a patient who was discovered to have a retained wound retractor following surgery.

There have been no other formal complaints requiring a review of hospital policy.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Christiansen', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Dr Jonathan Christiansen
Chief Medical Officer
Waitematā District Health Board