



15 October 2021

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Re: OIA request – Stroke patient data

Thank you for your Official Information Act request received initially as a partial transfer from the Ministry of Health on 21 September 2021 seeking information from Waitematā District Health Board (DHB) about patients who have suffered strokes and transient ischaemic attacks in 2019, 2020 and 2021.

That same day, we contacted you to acknowledge receipt of your request and you requested that we contact the Ministry of Health to advise it that you did not want separate data from each DHB but had requested a combined total.

We contacted the Ministry of Health, which subsequently advised us on 23 September that you had agreed to the partial transfer of your request. It transferred the following questions:

- 2. Of the total amount of strokes in NZ in 2019, 2020 and 2021:**
 - a. How many of the victims where:**
 - i. Overweight**
 - ii. Diabetic**
 - iii. High blood pressure / hypertension**
 - iv. Atrial Fibrillation**
 - v. High Cholesterol**
 - vi. Smokers**
 - vii. Identified as drinking alcohol regularly**
 - viii. Where clinically depressed, or identified high stress levels**
 - ix. Where medical misadventure strokes?**
- 3. Of the total amount of strokes and in NZ in 2019, 2020 and 2021:**
 - a. How many received thrombolysis treatment?**
 - c. How many were referred to either the Stroke Foundation of New Zealand or Stroke Central New Zealand?**
 - i. By region for Central Region**
 - d. How many received some kind of rehabilitation treatment?**
 - f. How many where secondary strokes?**
 - g. How many resulted in disability?**

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 8,600 people across more than 80 locations.

In addition to providing care to our own resident population, we are the Northern Region provider of forensic mental health services and child rehabilitation services, plus the metro Auckland provider of child community dental services and community alcohol and drug services.

In response to your request, we advise the following:

2. Of the total amount of strokes in NZ in 2019, 2020 and 2021:

- a. **How many of the victims where:**
 - i. **Overweight**
 - v. **High Cholesterol**
 - vii. **Identified as drinking alcohol regularly**
 - viii. **Where clinically depressed, or identified high stress levels**

3. Of the total amount of strokes and in NZ in 2019, 2020 and 2021:

- c. **How many were referred to either the Stroke Foundation of New Zealand or Stroke Central New Zealand?**
- g. **How many resulted in disability?**

We are providing a combined response to questions 2 and 3. We are unable to answer these specific questions as this data is not reliably captured by the International Classification of Disease (ICD) coding system.

To provide the information would require the review of individual clinical records of patients. Thousands of patient records would need to be reviewed and this would be a time-consuming undertaking. In addition, 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 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.

However, we are able to provide data for the following:

2. Of the total amount of strokes in NZ in 2019, 2020 and 2021:

- a. **How many of the victims where:**
 - ii. **Diabetic**
 - iii. **High blood pressure / hypertension**
 - iv. **Atrial Fibrillation**
 - vi. **Smokers**
 - ix. **Were medical misadventure strokes?**

3. Of the total amount of strokes and in NZ in 2019, 2020 and 2021:

- a. **How many received thrombolysis treatment?**
- d. **How many received some kind of rehabilitation treatment?**
- f. **How many where secondary strokes?**

The following data is based on ICD-coded (International Classification of Disease) admissions for stroke and is for unique (individual) patients only i.e. if a patient has 3 admissions for 3 different strokes they will only be counted once. To illustrate, in 2019, 937 individuals were admitted once or more for stroke but there were 1379 stroke admissions.

As previously mentioned, the accuracy of the information in Table 3 is limited by the ICD coding information available to us.

Table 1: Number of presentations for strokes to Waitematā DHB hospitals for the calendar years 2019, 2020 and 2021 year-to-date (YTD - 31 August)

	2019	2020	2021 YTD
Stroke Events (i.e. number of admissions for stroke. Some people had multiple admissions for stroke)	1379	1424	1048

Table 2: Individual patients suffering strokes at Waitematā DHB hospitals by year of first presentation 2019, 2020 and 2021 YTD (31 August)

	2019	2020	2021 YTD
Individual patients suffering strokes (i.e. each patient counted once even if admitted multiple times)	937	1015	761

Table 3: Characteristics of patients suffering strokes that presented to Waitematā DHB hospitals 2019, 2020 and 2021 YTD (31 August)

Diagnosis	2019	2020	2021 YTD
Atrial fibrillation	85	135	102
Diabetes	119	186	162
High blood pressure	341	211	126
Smokers	108	114	78
Received thrombolysis treatment	43	41	22
Received some form of rehabilitation treatment	211	227	192
Secondary strokes	197	123	93
Medical Misadventure Strokes †	6	6	6

† Data captured by Waitematā DHB ACC Injury Claims Team. Of the 18 patients identified above, ACC has declined four of these claims and we are still awaiting responses on a further three. For this characteristic, we have captured strokes which occurred in patients receiving treatment for another condition and where a stroke was not an expected outcome.

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 or freephone 0800 802 602.

I trust that the information we have been able to provide 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**