

29 NOV 2019

Ms Rachael McGonigal
Fyi-request-11581-a8760a31@requests.fyi.org.nz
Ref: H201909651

Dear Ms McGonigal

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request of 2 November 2019 to the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) for:

*"A recent Newshub article,
<https://scanmail.trustwave.com/?c=15517&d=10083eVENrYodKKxT8H1DsSaReqzxSOKwQa6CnezuA&u=https%3a%2f%2fwww%2enewshub%2eco%2enz%2fhome%2fpolitics%2f2019%2f10%2ftrans-woman-awaiting-surgery-appeals-for-cash-boost-to-ease-backlog-of-almost-200%2html>*

Quotes Dr Rita Yang, "But she said most of the complications related to those who have overseas surgery, and the issues could have been avoided if there had been appropriate follow-up care."

Can you please answer the following questions under the Official Information Act.

*1/ How many Transsexual patients who have had SRS off shore, have had to have followup work done here in NZ? (SRS is Sex Reassignment Surgery, not masectomy or hysterectomy.) Vaginoplasty mostly.
Full SRS.*

2/ How many Trans surgeries has Dr Yang completed on her own here in NZ and funded by MoH? How many funded by other than MoH?

3/ How many of Dr Yangs Trans patients have had to have further surgeries, corrective surgeries and rework?

4/ How many of Dr Yangs Trans patients have required extra care on failed skin grafts?

5/ Why will the MoH not fund SRS/GRS offshore when respected surgeons are out there, off shore, who have excellent credibility and clearly from the article, more patients could be done off shore for the price of 1 here?

\$53,000 for MtF SRS here in NZ compared to \$18,000 in Thailand. Almost 3 off shore to 1 done in NZ"

Information in response to your request is outlined below.

1. *How many Transsexual patients who have had SRS off shore, have had to have followup work done here in NZ? (SRS is Sex Reassignment Surgery, not masectomy or hysterectomy.) Vaginoplasty mostly. Full SRS.*

Based on the information available to the Ministry, since 2002 there have been four patients who had their original surgery overseas (either publicly or self-funded) who have had revision surgery performed in New Zealand and funded by the High Cost Treatment Pool.

The Ministry does not have information on any patients that may have had revision surgery through a district health board (DHB).

2. *How many Trans surgeries has Dr Yang completed on her own here in NZ and funded by MoH? How many funded by other than MoH?*

Dr Yang has completed one surgery in November 2019. The Ministry is not aware of any patients receiving surgery funded through a DHB. The Ministry does not hold information on patients who have received privately funded treatment.

3. *How many of Dr Yangs Trans patients have had to have further surgeries, corrective surgeries and rework?*

As noted in the response for question two, Dr Yang has treated one patient. No complications were reported.

4. *How many of Dr Yangs Trans patients have required extra care on failed skin grafts?*

Please refer to the response provided for question three.

5. *Why will the MoH not fund SRS/GRS offshore when respected surgeons are out there, off shore, who have excellent credibility and clearly from the article, more patients could be done off shore for the price of 1 here? \$53,000 for MtF SRS here in NZ compared to \$18,000 in Thailand. Almost 3 off shore to 1 done in NZ.*

When a service is available in New Zealand, the preferred option is to provide treatment for both cost and patient reasons. The cost of surgery overseas does not include travel and accommodation for the patient and a support person. Overseas travel for treatment also does not consider the impact on life for people required to travel off-shore with a prolonged stay required for pre-operative assessment, surgery and post-surgery recovery.

I trust this information fulfils your request. Under section 28 of the Act, you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry website.

Yours sincerely



M. Michelle Arrowsmith
Deputy Director-General
DHB Performance, Support and Infrastructure

