

Kate O'Connell
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Ref: H201803442

Dear Ms O'Connell

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request of 6 May 2018 under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) for

'I would like to inquire, by year, in the past 10 years:

- a) The number of individuals hospitalized/treated in ED due to a suicide attempt
- b) The number of those who returned to the community after the attempt (did not die)
- c) The number of these individuals who were already involved with some form of Mental Health services before entering hospital VS the number of those who were not currently seeing any support teams [at the time of attempt]

If this information is held, I'm assuming it is broken down by age/gender/ethnicity, if possible could I please receive it that way?'

The Ministry of Health (the Ministry) extended the time available to respond to your request until 15 June 2018 under section 15A of the Act, as further collation and research was required.

The Ministry does not hold information on numbers of confirmed suicide attempts, and is unable to respond to your requests in a), b) and c) above, as asked. Therefore, these parts of your request are refused under section 18(e) of the Act on the basis that the document(s) alleged to contain the information requested do not exist.

The Ministry does, however, have information on the number of publicly funded discharges where there was any reported external cause code of intentional self-harm. The data for years 2006/07 to 2015/16, broken down by age, sex and ethnicity, are provided in Appendix 1. Please note the 2015/16 data are considered provisional.

This information needs to be interpreted with the following caveats in mind.

- The data provided show the number of individuals hospitalised and subsequently discharged from hospital that had external cause codes for 'intentional self-harm'.

- Please note that these are not hospitalisations due to intentional self-harm, they are hospitalisations where intentional self-harm was reported. The self-harm may have occurred during the hospitalisation, or be a secondary factor that affected the treatment when a patient was admitted for a different condition.
- The data is coded using the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems. This coding system does not distinguish between suicide attempts and other intentional self-harm.
- The coding system does not distinguish between intentional self-harm before being admitted to hospital, or occurring during the period of hospitalisation.
- The Ministry does not hold information on intentional self-harm where treatment was only provided in an emergency department (ED) and did not meet the threshold for admission. People seen in ED for less than three hours are not admitted to hospital and are not included in these data.
- This data excludes short-stay ED hospitalisations due to changes in reporting over this period. For more information about this, go to www.health.govt.nz/publication/factsheet-short-stay-emergency-department-events.
- People hospitalised more than once (readmissions, transfers, multiple incidents) are counted each time. This means that the data reflects events, rather than a count of individuals; i.e., it is possible an individual may be counted more than once in a given period.
- It is important to recognise that self-harm occurs for multiple complex reasons and is not always a suicide attempt, or based on a desire to end one's life. With this in mind, any assumptions or references to the self-harm data shared is best managed and utilised in a way which is respectful to the lived experience of distress that often precipitates self-harm.

I trust this information fulfils your request. You have the right, under section 28 of the Act, to ask the Ombudsman to review my decision to withhold information under this request.

Yours sincerely



Jill Lane
Director
Service Commissioning