



17 May 2018

Jason McIntosh
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Dear Mr McIntosh

Youth mortality and suicide

I refer to your 13 May email requesting information about youth mortality and suicide in New Zealand. In response to your information request, the information you seek is publicly available (s18(d) of the Act) at: www.hqsc.govt.nz/our-programmes/mrc/cymrc/publications-and-resources/publication/1311/

Questions	Answers
1. I learnt from Radio NZ News Media that NZs main cause of death in youth is suicide. Is this factual?	The Child and Youth Mortality Review Committee (CYMRC) recently released the 13 th Data Report ('the Report'). The report contains information on mortality in children and young people aged 28 days to 24 years. From the age of 15 years onwards, suicide is the leading cause of death, and accounts for 36 percent of all deaths in young people aged 15-24 years. There were 1758 deaths due to suicide during the period 2002-16. For further details on suicide mortality in children and young people aged 10-24 years, refer to chapter 5 of the Report.
2. Is it also true that the majority of these self-inflicted deaths occur mainly in the more impoverished areas?	Figure 5.4 (p.61) of the Report shows the distribution of suicide mortality in children and young people aged 10-24 years by NZ Deprivation Index decile (NZ Dep). This figure shows that deaths due to suicide are more frequent in those living in more deprived areas. The suicide mortality rate was statistically significantly higher in those children and young people living in deprivation deciles 7-10 ('most deprived') than those living in deciles 1-3 ('least deprived').
3. What are our suicide statistics?	Detailed statistics on suicide mortality in children and young people aged 10-24 years are presented in the following tables in chapter 16 of the Report (p.103-4): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Figure 5.1 shows the numbers and rates of suicide deaths in children and young people. There were 118 such suicide deaths in 2016 (a rate of 12.72 per 100,000 population).• Figure 5.2 shows the numbers of suicide deaths by age and sex. Males are over-represented in suicide mortality

	<p>data, although this is not apparent until the mid-teenage years. In the younger years, the rate of suicide deaths in males and females is similar. Among those aged 10-24 years, the ratio of male to female suicide deaths is 2.5 to 1.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Figure 5.3 shows the numbers of suicide deaths by age and ethnicity. Deaths due to suicide in Māori tend to begin at a younger age: 60 percent of deaths in those aged 10-14 years were in tamariki Māori. • Figure 5.4 shows the rates of suicide by NZ Deprivation Index decile. The suicide mortality rate was 7.43 per 100,000 in the least deprived decile and 20.31 per 100,000 in the most deprived decile.
<p>4. How are we now ranked in the world?</p>	<p>The CYMRC does not make international comparisons with other countries on suicide statistics. However, there are at least two international reports where New Zealand youth suicide rate comparisons are made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A UNICEF report that presents World Health Organization (WHO) mortality data on adolescent suicide rates in young people aged 15-19 years in high income countries, 2009-13 (see p.22). This report is available at URL: www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/RC14_eng.pdf • An OECD report that presents WHO mortality data on teenage suicide in young people aged 15-19 years (see p.2). This report is available at URL: www.oecd.org/els/family/CO_4_4_Teenage-Suicide.pdf

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802-602.

Yours sincerely



Karen Orsborn
Acting Chief Executive

