

**Canterbury**  
District Health Board  
Te Poari Hauora o Waitaha  
**CORPORATE OFFICE**

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21 March 2019

Moshe Livne

Email: [fyi-request-9567-baab0c94@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-9567-baab0c94@requests.fyi.org.nz); [Moshe.livne@gmail.com](mailto:Moshe.livne@gmail.com);

Dear Mr Livne

**RE Official information request CDHB 10037**

I refer to your email received dated 12 February 2019 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act from Canterbury DHB. I note your clarification of 20 February 2019 i.e. *“My aim is to provide a more informed (free) way for people to assess risks of going into procedures. I might provide this as a searchable database, so the number of procedures is not really of consequence.*

- **I would like to have a list of surgical procedures over the last 5 years by clinical code along with the number of complications or damages caused by each procedure.**

We have collected and reviewed the information held the Canterbury DHB in response to your request but we have decided that it is inappropriate to provide the data in the way you have requested. Our reasons for this are as follows:

1. To provide the data on the number of complications only will not provide a context in which the public will be able to reasonably understand the risks of undertaking various surgical procedures. Where there are high volumes of surgical procedures, the number of complications may be correspondingly high even though as a percentage of the total these may represent a very small proportion of complications against the total volume.
2. The bare data does not provide sufficient context to enable the public to undertake an objective evaluation of benefits versus the risk of undertaking a surgical procedure. Complications can vary in their seriousness and need to be considered alongside the following factors:
  - Complications may be related to patient co-morbidities at the time of treatment.
  - Complications can be as a result of age and health status of the individual patient rather than procedure undertaken.
  - Complications may be related to whether the procedure was undertaken as an acute/elective admission.
  - The raw data will not show whether the nature of the complication was minor or major

All of the above issues are taken into consideration and discussed with the patient by the surgical specialist when offering treatment to each patient.

To provide the information to a level of detail that would resolve all of the issues identified above would entail substantial research and collation.

We believe that simply publishing the data to a website could result in serious misinterpretation and would not be in the public interest.

We are therefore declining your request under Section 18(f) of the Official Information Act i.e. *"...that the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research"*.

If you disagree with our decision to withhold information you may, under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act, seek an investigation and review of our decision from the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz); or Freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, or an edited version of this response, may be published on the Canterbury DHB website after your receipt of this response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carolyn Gullery', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Carolyn Gullery  
**Executive Director**  
**Planning, Funding & Decision Support**