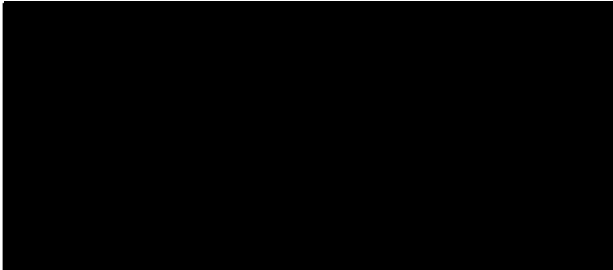


6 April 2021



Re: Official Information Act (OIA) request – information about patients placed in isolation within DHB hospitals to prevent the spread of disease.

I refer to your Official Information Act request dated 19 March 2021, requesting the following information:

1. **Could you please provide the following data in an excel spreadsheet?**
 - The number of patients placed in isolation in a DHB hospital in the 2018, 2019 and 2020 calendar years, broken down by year
 - What condition each person had
 - What type of isolation were they in - contact, droplet, airborne, protective etc.
2. **What the longest stint in continuous isolation was during those three years, what condition it was for and what type of isolation they were in.**
3. **What PPE and protocols are required for each type of isolation (contact, droplet, airborne, protective, etc)?**
4. **How many of last year's cases were Covid-19 related?**
5. **Did the emergence of Covid-19 cause changes to any of the PPE or protocols required?**

Question 1

Standard precautions are infection prevention and control (IPC) practices applied to all patient care. They are based upon a risk assessment and are based on common sense practices and the use of personal protective equipment. Transmission-based precautions are the second tier of infection

prevention and control practices that are applied, in addition to standard precautions, for patients who may be infected or colonised with certain infectious agents for which additional precautions are needed to prevent infection transmission. These include contact, droplet and airborne precautions.

We do not record centrally when, or which transmission-based precaution is applied as this is part of routine care for patients admitted to hospital. Accordingly, the information you have requested cannot be provided as it does not exist – s18(e) OIA.

There are multiple reasons why transmission-based precautions may be applied. This includes, but is not limited to, patients admitted with acute respiratory infections, infectious gastroenteritis, suspected or colonised with multiple antimicrobial resistant pathogens, tuberculosis, and other viral exanthematous diseases (diseases characterised by a skin eruption or rash) such as measles and chicken pox. The choice of which of the transmission-based precautions is required to be adhered to depends on the mode of transmission of the infectious agent that the patient is suspected or proven to be infected with.

Question 2

Transmission-based precautions may be applied for the entire length of a patient's hospital stay or for shorted periods, such as for the period of infectiousness of the infectious agent. We do not record centrally the length of time that transmission-based precautions are applied, accordingly, the information you have requested cannot be provided as it does not exist – s18(e) OIA.

Question 3

For each transmission-based precaution there are a number of IPC practices to follow, which include patient placement (the room and air handling requirements), personal protective equipment, patient movement about the facility, medical equipment, handling linen and waste, and the cleaning of the environment during and after the patient's stay. The practices used at Auckland DHB are consistent with those used elsewhere and are based on Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention (CDC) and World Health Organisation (WHO) guidance.

The CDC guidance is available at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/basics/index.html>

The WHO guidance is available at:

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/modes-of-transmission-of-virus-causing-covid-19-implications-for-ipc-precaution-recommendations>

Question 4

During 2020 there were 31 patients admitted with confirmed SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) infection. We do not hold data relating to patients that were initially suspected of having SARS-CoV-2 but subsequently returned a negative result and an alternative clinical diagnosis made.

Question 5

The emergence of COVID-19 did not result in any changes to the guidance provided for transmission-based precautions. As part of our planning and response to COVID-19, we provided extensive additional education and training to staff regarding the application and use of appropriate infection, prevention and control processes, including transmission-based precautions and the use of PPE.

You are entitled to seek a review of the response by the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act. Information about how to make a complaint is available at 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 Auckland DHB website.

Yours sincerely,



Ailsa Claire, OBE
Chief Executive of Te Toka Tumai (Auckland District Health Board)

