



Official Information Act Request: re Isolation of all Viruses on Vaccination Schedule

4 messages

Tue, Nov 17, 2020 at 18:35

[REDACTED]
To: enquiries@esr.cri.nz

This is a formal request made under the New Zealand Official Information Act (OIA).

Description of Requested Records:

All records in the possession, custody or control of the ESR describing the isolation of all Viruses on the [New Zealand Immunisation Schedule](#), directly from a sample taken from a human patient, where the patient sample was not first combined with any other source of genetic material (i.e. monkey kidney cells aka vero cells; lung cells from a lung cancer patient).

Please note that I am using "isolation" in the every-day sense of the word: the act of separating a thing(s) from everything else. I am not requesting records where "isolation of virus" refers instead to:

- the culturing of something, or
- the performance of an amplification test (i.e. a PCR test), or
- the sequencing of something.

Please also note that my request is not limited to records that were authored by the ESR or that pertain to work done by ESR. My request includes any sort of record, for example (but not limited to) any published peer-reviewed study that ESR has downloaded or printed.

If any records match the above description of requested records and are currently available to the public elsewhere, please provide enough information about each record so that I may identify and access each record with certainty (i.e. title, author(s), date, journal, where the public may access it).

Format: PDF documents or links to PDFs sent to me via email; I do not wish for anything to be shipped to me.

The list of viruses that are currently on the Ministry Of Health's Vaccination Schedule:

- Influenza
- Tetanus
- Diptheria
- Pertussis
- Rotavirus
- Hepatitis B
- Polio
- Haemophilus Influenzae type b
- Pneumococcal
- Measles
- Mumps
- Rubella
- Varicella
- Human Papillomavirus
- Zoster

Please include any virus that I may have missed in the list above that is on the Ministry of Health's Vaccination Schedule.

Kind Regards

[REDACTED]

Thu, Nov 19, 2020 at 10:20

To: enquiries@esr.cri.nz

Greetings,

I would like to amend my Official Information Act Request to clarify that I am not requesting a single record that contains the isolation of ALL viruses listed. Rather, my request is asking for records that have isolated any of the viruses. I would expect that a single record would focus on only 1 virus.

Can my request be modified as follows?

Original Request

"All records in the possession, custody or control of the ESR describing the isolation of *all* Viruses on the [New Zealand Immunisation Schedule](#), directly from a sample taken from a human patient, where the patient sample was not first combined with any other source of genetic material (i.e. monkey kidney cells aka vero cells; lung cells from a lung cancer patient)."

To
All records in the possession, custody or control of the ESR describing the isolation of *any* Viruses on the [New Zealand Immunisation Schedule](#), directly from a sample taken from a human patient, where the patient sample was not first combined with any other source of genetic material (i.e. monkey kidney cells aka vero cells; lung cells from a lung cancer patient).

Thank you
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OIA & Privacy Requests <OIA&PrivacyRequests@esr.cri.nz>

Thu, Nov 19, 2020 at 18:08

To: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of your amended official information request received by ESR on 19 November 2020.

We will endeavour to respond to your request as soon as possible and in any event no later than Thursday 17 December 2020, being 20 working days after the day your amended request was received pursuant to section 15(1AA) of the Official Information Act 1982. If we are unable to respond to your request by then, we will notify you of an extension of that timeframe.

Thank you and regards

Simon McSweeney-Harte

OIA & Privacy Requests

Institute of Environmental Science and Research

OIA&PrivacyRequests@esr.cri.nz

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Fri, Dec 4, 2020 at 16:22

To: OIA & Privacy Requests <OIA&PrivacyRequests@esr.cri.nz>

Greetings,

I would like to amend my OIA. I erroneously included the following bacteria based diseases in the virus based list.

- Pertussis
- Pneumococcal
- Tetanus

So it should be changed to:

The list of diseases allegedly caused by viruses that are currently on the Ministry Of Health's Immunisation Schedule:

- Influenza
- Diphtheria
- Rotavirus
- Hepatitis B
- Polio
- Haemophilus Influenzae type b
- Measles
- Mumps
- Rubella
- Varicella
- Human Papillomavirus
- Zoster

17 December 2020



Dear 

Official Information Act Request: Isolation of viruses on vaccination schedule

On 17 November 2020, you sent a request for information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) as follows:

“All records in the possession, custody or control of the ESR describing the isolation of all Viruses on the New Zealand Immunisation Schedule, directly from a sample taken from a human patient, where the patient sample was not first combined with any other source of genetic material (i.e. monkey kidney cells aka vero cells; lung cells from a lung cancer patient).”

On 19 November 2020, you amended your request as follows:

“All records in the possession, custody or control of the ESR describing the isolation of any Viruses on the New Zealand Immunisation Schedule, directly from a sample taken from a human patient, where the patient sample was not first combined with any other source of genetic material (i.e. monkey kidney cells aka vero cells; lung cells from a lung cancer patient).”

Our response to your request:

ESR does not culture (isolate) varicella zoster virus, measles, mumps or rubella as the PCR test adequately diagnoses such infections and there is no clinical or surveillance need.

Rabies virus, Human Papilloma Virus, Hepatitis B and Rotavirus can only be cultured (isolated) in specialised culture systems which we do not have.

We have an active surveillance programme to find and possibly isolate any polioviruses in the population. We have not found any wildtype poliovirus by means of isolation for many years in New Zealand.

The only virus we frequently culture which is on the New Zealand Immunisation Schedule is Influenza A and B virus. We take a nasopharyngeal swab directly from a human patient, and this sample is NOT combined with any other source of genetic material before we inoculate permissive mammalian cell lines. Growth is seen after 7-10 days.

The records we have on the isolation of viruses on the New Zealand Immunisation Schedule are patient reports and our standing operating procedure. We have withheld patient records in order to protect the privacy of natural persons pursuant to section 9(2)(a) of the Act. We

have also withheld our standing operating procedure as its release would disadvantage ESR's commercial activities pursuant to section 9(2)(i) of the Act.

For records on the tests we do for influenza viral culture, please see the *attached* spreadsheet:

- Influenza_Antigenic_Typing_Data_20201209_redacted

Columns with missing data have been redacted to protect the privacy of natural persons pursuant to section 9(2)(a) of the Act.

We grow influenza samples in both MDCK cells and SIAT cells. Sometimes we are successful, and the samples grow in both cell lines. Other times the sample only grows in one. If a sample grows in both cell lines, we only perform an HAI test on one of these samples.

There are two results (rows) for each accession. If both results are negative, the sample did not grow, and we do not have an isolate. If one row has a like or low reactor to a sera result, we are successful in obtaining an isolate. The other row for this accession should have a 'not tested' result.

Your right to seek a review

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 freephone 0800 802 602.

Thank you for your request.

Yours sincerely,



Jill Vintiner
**Joint General Manager Health and Environment Group - Health
ESR**