

OIA: SARS-COV-2 Isolation & Sequencing Experiment Records

Tue, Dec 14, 2021 at 10:43 AM

To: University of Otago Registrar <registrar@otago.ac.nz>

This is a formal request for access to general records, made under the *Official Information Act*.

Note

The University of Otago has claimed to have isolated SARS-COV-2 in 2020. This request seeks additional information on the cell culture experiments and the sequencing experiments.

SARS-COV-2 Cell Culture Experiments

I am requesting all records of the SARS-COV-2 cell culture experiment.

Please include but not limited to the following:

- The cell line used in the cell culture
- The quantities of the material that you claim has the virus added to the cell culture experimental group
- The quantities of the material that do not have virus and were used in the control group (ie, the same amount of virus free sample that was added to the control group required to mimic the experimental group)
- The quantity and dilution of Cell Nutrient Solution that is used in the Cell Culture BEFORE the experiment (the amount of nutrient solution required to maintain a healthy cell culture).
- The quantity and dilution of the Cell Nutrient Solution used in the experimental group
- The quantity and dilution of the Cell Nutrient Solution used in the control group
- Antibiotics & Quantities for the cell culture experimental group
- Antibiotics & Quantities for the cell culture control group
- Antifungals & Quantities for the cell culture experimental group
- Antifungals & Quantities for the cell culture control group
- UTM/VTM used in the experimental group (oftentimes added to the sample which is believed to contain the virus which ends up in the experimental group's cell culture).
- UTM/VTM used in the control group (applied in the same way to the virus free sample)
- The number of wells used in the experimental group
- The number of wells used in the control group
- The number of wells in the experimental group that experienced CPE
- The number of wells in the control group that experienced CPE

I am requesting records for the SARS-COV-2 sequencing experiment:

- All records of the control group used to compare the virus genetic sequence to the control group's genetic sequence
- IE, running the exact same process for creating the virus' genetic sequence but using the output from the cell culture control group
- The purity of the virus in the sample used in the sequencing experiment
 - IE, did you purify the virus from the output from the experimental group before running it through Next Gen Sequencing/PCR/De-novo sequencing/etc?

Record Search

I do not expect the University to search students' computers, labs' computers, or even researchers' computers. I expect the University to direct this request to the appropriate department who have *experts* in the field of virology & microbiology such as professor Miguel E. Quinones-Mateu who claimed to have isolated SARS-COV-2.

Thank you for this information.

OIA: SARS-COV-2 Isolation & Sequencing Experiment Records

UoO - Official Information Act <oia@otago.ac.nz>

Mon, Jan 17, 2022 at 5:02 PM

We refer to your information request dated 14 December 2021 made under the Official Information Act 1982 (Act).

You have requested "all records of the SARS-COV-2 cell culture experiment" and "records for the SARS-COV-2 sequencing experiment". You have noted that you do not expect the University to search students' computers, labs' computers, or researchers' computers, and that you expect the University to direct this request to the appropriate department who have experts in the field of virology & microbiology such as Professor Miguel E. Quiñones-Mateu.

We decline your request pursuant to section 18(d) of the Act on the basis that the information you have requested will soon be publicly available.

Professor Miguel E. Quiñones-Mateu is currently writing a manuscript, which when completed will contain the information you have requested. We are happy to share a copy of this manuscript with you once it has been finalised.

There is no confirmed date when the information will be made publicly available, but it is likely to be around the end of February or early March 2022.

If you are not satisfied with our response to your information request, section 28(3) of the Act provides you with the right to ask an Ombudsman to investigate and review this response. However, we would welcome the opportunity to discuss any concerns with you first.

Ngā mihi

Kelsey



Kelsey Kennard
Official Information and Compliance Coordinator

Official Information Requests

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OIA: SARS-COV-2 Isolation & Sequencing Experiment Records

Mon, Jan 17, 2022 at 9:44 PM

To: UoO - Official Information Act <oia@otago.ac.nz>

Greetings,

Considering that Professor Miguel E. Quinones-Mateu claimed to have isolated and sequenced SARS-COV-2 back in 2020, I am very surprised that this information wasn't published already. Unless of course, my OIA request has prompted this information to be published. Can you please confirm if this is the case.

I would also like to modify my request to the following listed below:

Description of Requested Records:

All records in the possession, custody or control of the University of Otago that contain **additional details** (listed below) of the so-called "virus isolation" and "whole genome sequencing" procedures/methodologies for SARS-COV-2 as Professor Miguel E. Quinones-Mateu claimed to have isolated and sequenced SARS-COV-2.

Pre-Experimental Details:

- The Cell Nutrient Solution (storage medium) quantity and dilution that the cell lines are stored in for preparation of the experiment

Cell Culture - Experimental Group Details:

- The quantity of material from (allegedly infected) nasopharyngeal and oropharyngeal swab specimens that was added to the cell culture experimental group (per well)
- Antibiotics Quantities for the cell culture experimental group (per well)
- Antifungals Quantities for the cell culture experimental group (per well)
- Fetal Bovine Serum Quantities and dilution for the cell culture experimental group (per well)
- The quantity and dilution of the Cell Nutrient Solution (DMEM) used in the experimental group (per well)
- The number of wells used in the experimental Group
- **The number of wells in the experimental group that experienced CPE**
- Type and quantity of UTM/VTM used in the experimental group (used in the storage of swab specimens from the patient diagnosed with "the virus" - per swab)
- Any additional chemicals or components added to the experimental group, with quantities (per well)

Cell Culture - "Mock Infected" / Control Group Details:

- The quantity of material from uninfected nasopharyngeal and oropharyngeal swab specimens that was added to the cell culture control group (per well)
- Antibiotics Quantities for the cell culture control group (per well)
- Antifungals Quantities for the cell culture control group (per well)
- Fetal Bovine Serum Quantities and dilution for the cell culture control group (per well)
- The quantity and dilution of the Cell Nutrient Solution (DMEM) used in the control group (per well)
- The number of wells used in the control Group
- **The number of wells in the control group that experienced CPE**
- Type and quantity of UTM/VTM used in the control group (used in the storage of control swab specimens from a patient considered free of "the virus" - per swab)
- Any additional chemicals or components added to the control group, with quantities (per well)

"Whole Genome" Sequencing - Purity and Control Details:

- The degree of purity of the "virus" sample used in the sequencing experiment.
- All details of the control group that was used when comparing the results of sequencing:
 - the total nucleic acid extracted from the "viral lysate" (from the experimental group), versus
 - the total nucleic acid extracted from the non-viral lysate (from the control group).

In summary, please provide all records that include any additional details of the experimental and/or control groups that were used when "isolating and sequencing the virus".

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 one with certainty (i.e. title, author(s), date, journal, where the public may access it). Please provide URLs where possible.

Format: Pdf documents sent to me via email; I do not wish for anything to be shipped to me.

Please confirm or deny if the above modification request for official information will be published or not. If it won't be publically available, please process normally.

Thank you

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