Te Whatu Ora
Health New Zealand

24 March 2023

S9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe S9(2)(a)

Official information request HNZ00012137

Thank you for your email on 23 February 2023, asking for the following which has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act). Please see outlined below a response to each part of your request.

What was the standard dose for patients?

The standard dose is 200 mg on the first day and 100mg daily for subsequent days.

Inpatient treatment dosing was based on the Ministry of Health guidelines (noting that these have been regularly updated so this link is to the current version, the treatment guidelines in 2020 would have been different):
Clinical-Management-of-COVID-19-in-Hospitalised-Adults.pdf (tewhatuora.govt.nz)

These guidelines are for hospitalised patients, but community patients would have been treated as per the Pharmac criteria which have changed over time and relevant community pathways (available to primary care via community health pathways):
COVID-19 antivirals: Access Criteria - Pharmac | New Zealand Government

If so how many patients were given this drug?

Auckland	We do not currently have an electronic prescribing system across the hospital in Auckland. We can only provide indicative information. Therefore, we are refusing this request citing Section 18(e) of the Act – on the basis that the information does not exist. However, we can advise that our Pharmacy issued 2,237 vials of Remdesivir from 24 February 2022 to 24 February 2023. This leads us to estimate that 746 patients were issued with a 'standard' 3-day course.
Bay of Plenty	133
Canterbury	346
Capital and Coast	229
Counties Manukau	796
Hawke's Bay	Te Whatu Ora in Hawke's Bay first dispensed Remdesivir in January 2022 and have provided 453 units (of 100mg/20ml) since then. This is dispensed through the Hospital Pharmacy with some supplied as ward stock. Te Whatu Ora in Hawke's Bay cannot confirm the dosing individual patients received; whether it was part dosing or altered dosing following guidelines after the Pharmacy had dispensed to them, without manually reviewing individual patient files. Therefore, this portion of your request is

	declined under section 18(f) of the Act relating to substantial collation and research.
Hutt Valley	345
Lakes	91
MidCentral	488
Nelson Marlborough	100
Northland	We do not maintain a separate database in Northland which records this information. In order to provide it we would have to undertake a manual review of all dispensing of the medication to determine the actual number of patients who received it. This would require substantial research and collation and we are therefore refusing this part of the request under section 18(f) of the Act.
Southern	Gathering this data for Southern would require a manual review of individual patient records. After considering the options of charging or extending the timeframe, we have concluded that we are unable to respond to your request under section 18(f) of the Act, as the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.
South Canterbury	463
Tairāwhiti	25
Taranaki	114
Waikato	440
Wairarapa	We do not maintain a separate database in Wairarapa which records this information. In order to provide it we would have to undertake a manual review of all dispensing of the medication to determine the actual number of patients who received it. This would require substantial research and collation and we are therefore refusing this part of the request under section 18(f) of the Act.
Waitematā	713
West Coast	7
Whanganui	100

What was the outcome for those patients?

It is difficult to comment on outcomes as the drug is not being administered as part of a study. Studies have demonstrated good efficacy if given early to unvaccinated patients in preventing hospitalisation, and of most benefit to unvaccinated hospitalised patients.

A patient's response to prescribed medication is recorded on individual medical files and to provide the information requested, a clinician would have to review each individual medical file. This would require substantial research and collation and would necessarily take the clinician away from their primary role of treating patients therefore we are refusing this part of the request under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act.

If the request is primarily interested in establishing whether there were any adverse outcomes attributed to Remdesivir, please refer to the Centre for Adverse Reactions Monitoring (CARM) as the agency responsible for monitoring adverse reactions to medicines.

Is Remdesivir still being used as an anti-viral for patients at your hospital?

Yes, Remdesivir continues to be in use at hospitals, as a recommended antiviral for the treatment of high-risk COVID-19 patients if ineligible for Paxlovid. Paxlovid is the preferred drug for early treatment in those at high risk of poor outcome.

How to get in contact

If you have any questions, you can contact us at hnzOIA@health.govt.nz.

If you are not happy with this response, you have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman. Information about how to do this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by phoning 0800 802 602.

As this information may be of interest to other members of the public, Health NZ may proactively release a copy of this response on Health NZ's website. All requester data, including your name and contact details, will be removed prior to release. The released response will be made available on our website.

Nāku iti noa, nā

Sasha Wood

Sasha Wood
Interim Lead OIA & Proactive Release
Government Partnership and Risk