

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Ref: H202102878

[REDACTED]

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) transferred to the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) on 12 March 2021 for:

"All studies and/or reports in the possession, custody or control of The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet describing the purification of "SARS-COV-2" said to have caused disease in humans (via maceration, filtration and use of an ultracentrifuge; also referred to at times by some people as "isolation"), directly from a sample taken from a diseased human, where the patient sample was not first combined with any other source of genetic material (i.e. monkey kidney cells aka Vero cells; fetal bovine serum)."

The Ministry does not hold any information relating to your request. Therefore, your request is refused under section 18(g) of the Act, as the information requested is not held by the Ministry, and I have no reason to believe that this information is held by another agency subject to the Act. However, further information that may be of use has been previously provided to you below (refers H202100057 & H202100059):

- There are several examples of the virus being isolated and cultured in a laboratory setting. One example provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) describes the isolation and culture of SARS-CoV-2. This information and research on SARS-CoV-2 can be found at the following link: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/26/6/20-0516> article.
- A research paper, isolation and rapid sharing of the 2019 novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) from the first patient diagnosed with COVID-19 in Australia, describes the first isolation and sequencing of SARS-CoV-2 in Australia. It is available at: www.mja.com.au/journal/2020/212/10/isolation-and-rapid-sharing-2019-novel-coronavirus-sarscov-2-first-patient

Under section 28(3) of the Act you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry website at: www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'N' followed by a horizontal line and a small flourish.

Nick Allan
Manager, OIA Services
Office of the Director-General



30 March 2021

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I write in response to your Official Information Act request of 2 March 2021, which sought: “All studies and/or reports in the possession, custody or control of the University of Otago describing the purification of “SARS-COV-2” said to have caused disease in humans (via maceration, filtration and use of ultracentrifuge; also referred to at times by some people as “isolation”), directly from a sample taken from a diseased human, where the patient sample was not first combined with any other source of genetic material (i.e. monkey kidney cells aka Vero cells; fetal bovine serum)”.

Thank you for clarifying in your email precisely what is out of scope for this request.

I can confirm that the University holds no records which fall within the scope of your request. Accordingly, we decline your request pursuant to section 18(g) of the Act on the basis that the information requested is not held by the University.

If you are not satisfied with our response to your information request, you have 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.

Yours sincerely

Mayhaka Mendis
Manager, Policy and Compliance
Office of the Registrar

OIA: re Purification of SARS-COV-2

Tue, Mar 2, 2021 at 4:04 PM

To: "Information [DPMC]" <information@dpmc.govt.nz>

Dear Official Information Officer,

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

Description of Requested Records:

All studies and/or reports in the possession, custody or control of The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet describing the **purification** of "SARS-COV-2" said to have caused disease in humans (via maceration, filtration and use of an ultracentrifuge; also referred to at times by some people as "isolation"), directly from a sample taken from a diseased human, where the patient sample was not first combined with any other source of **genetic** material (i.e. monkey kidney cells aka Vero cells; fetal bovine serum).

Please note that I am not requesting studies/reports where researchers failed to **purify** the suspected "virus" and instead:

- cultured an unpurified sample or other unpurified substance, and/or
- performed an amplification test (i.e. a PCR test) on all the RNA from a patient sample or from a cell culture, or on genetic material from any unpurified substance, and/or
- sequenced the total RNA from a patient sample or from a cell culture or from any unpurified substance, and/or
- produced electron microscopy images of unpurified things.

For further clarity, please note I am already aware that according to virus theory a "virus" requires host cells in order to replicate, and I am **not** requesting records describing the **replication** of a "virus" without host cells.

Further, I am **not** requesting records that describe a suspected "virus" floating in a vacuum; I am simply requesting records that describe its **purification** (**separation** from everything else in the patient sample, as per standard laboratory practices for the purification of other small things).

Please also note that my request is **not limited** to records that were authored by The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet or that pertain to work done at/by The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. Rather, my request includes any record matching the above description, for example (but not limited to) any published peer-reviewed study authored by anyone, anywhere, ever that has been downloaded or printed by The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and possibly (but not necessarily) relied on as evidence of a disease-causing "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.

Relevance

PM Jacinda Ardern recently [Spoke](#): "This virus can mean life or death, this is a virus that kills"

Since PM Jacinda Ardern is claiming the viruses exist, causes disease, and can kill, then this request MUST be responded to by her. She needs to substantiate her own claims.

I have already sent these requests to other scientific organisations such as ESR so there is no need to forward this request. PM Jacinda should have access to this information as she has clearly made these bold claims on video. PM Jacinda is responsible for answering to her own claims.

Complexity

Please Note, this is not a complex request nor is it a request that will generate too many records to search through. I have already done a preliminary record search through Google Scholar and have read many scientific papers on this subject. I have not found any responsive publicly available scientific records including records referenced and published by the USA CDC. I already have a response (#20-02166-FOIA) from the CDC from November where no records were found. MOH/ESR responded back in August 2020 (REF: H202005599) with no records. So I would expect this request to be answered within the normal response time.

Kind Regards

--



15 MAR 2021



Ref: PMO 2021-053



Official Information Act request relating to the purification of SARS-COV-2

Thank you for your request made under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), received on 2 March 2021. You requested:

"...All studies and/or reports in the possession, custody or control of Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern describing the purification of "SARS-COV-2" said to have caused disease in humans (via maceration, filtration and use of an ultracentrifuge; also referred to at times by some people as "isolation"), directly from a sample taken from a diseased human, where the patient sample was not first combined with any other source of genetic material (i.e. monkey kidney cells aka Vero cells; fetal bovine serum)..."

I believe the requested information is more closely connected to the functions of the Ministry of Health. Accordingly, I have decided under section 14(b)(ii) of the Act to transfer your request to the Ministry of Health.

The Ministry of Health has the usual timeframes under the Act from receipt of this transfer to make a decision on your request.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Raj Nahna'.

Raj Nahna
Chief of Staff

133 Molesworth Street
PO Box 5013
Wellington 6140
New Zealand
T+64 4 496 2000

19 April 2021

[REDACTED]
By email: [REDACTED]
Ref: H202103782

Dear [REDACTED]

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) on 29 March 2021 for "*records of purified SARS-COV-2 virus*".

The information you have requested is not held by the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) or another agency subject to the Act. As such, I am refusing your request under section 18(g) of the Act.

Further information that may be of use has already been provided to you in earlier responses. Please refer to the responses provided to you on 19 January 2021 (H202100057 refers) 10 February 2021 (H202100057 refers), 22 March 2021 (H202102878 refers), and 29 March 2021.

Please note, the Ministry may use section 18(h) of the Act to decline your requests in the future, where the nature of the request is frivolous or vexatious.

Under section 28(3) of the Act you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely



Nick Allan
Manager, OIA Services
Office of the Director-General

On Wednesday, February 24th, 2021 at 10:15 PM, [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Dear Health Ministers,

I am writing to you on advice from the Australian Department of Health (the Department) to seek clarification on information requested in a Freedom of Information (FOI) request that was sent to the Department.

The Department's initial response on 24th August 2020 (attached: "Initial FOI 1937 Response"), stated: "To obtain the information you are seeking please direct your request to the various State and territory Departments of Health".

After further correspondence between the FOI author and the Department, a more formal response was given (attached: "FOI 1937"), yet the outcome remained the same.

I am therefore writing to you to on initial advice by the Department of Health to confirm whether you do hold the information requested in the original request to the Department, as shown in attachment "FOI 1937" and pasted again below:

"All records in the possession, custody or control of The Department of Health describing the isolation of a SARS-COV-2 virus, directly from a sample taken from a diseased 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 SARS-COV-2" 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 Department of Health or that pertain to work done by The Department of Health. My request includes any sort of record, for example (but not limited to) any published peer reviewed study that The Department of Health has downloaded or printed."

I look forward to your response.

[REDACTED]

Fw: Letter from CEO, Canberra Health Services - Pathology (SARS-COV-2 virus)

Thu, Jul 15, 2021 at 12:00 AM

To: Christine Massey <cmssyo@gmail.com>, "Christine.Massey@protonmail.com" <Christine.Massey@protonmail.com>

Sent with ProtonMail Secure Email.

----- Original Message -----

On Friday, March 19th, 2021 at 9:16 AM, CEOHealth <CEOHealth@act.gov.au> wrote:

OFFICIAL

Good morning

Please find attached a letter from the CEO, Canberra Health Services.

Kind regards

Nicole

Nicole Stevenson | Director

Office of the Chief Executive Officer | Canberra Health Services | ACT Government

T: 02 5124 4702 | M: 0411 154 648 | E: nicole.stevenson@act.gov.au

Building 28, Level 2, Canberra Hospital, Yamba Drive Garran ACT 2606

RELIABLE | PROGRESSIVE | RESPECTFUL | KIND

CHS has flexible work practices, and I may be working at unusual times. If you receive my emails out of standard work hours, please know that I have no expectation that you will respond at that time.

This email, and any attachments, may be confidential and also privileged. If you are not the intended recipient, please notify the sender and delete all copies of this transmission along with any attachments immediately. You should not copy or use it for any purpose, nor disclose its contents to any other person.

 **Letter from CEO Canberra Health Services - Pathology.pdf**



ACT
Government

**Canberra Health
Services**

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information Request to Commonwealth Department of Health

Thank you for your email of 24 February 2021 to Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA, Minister for Health about your Freedom of Information request to the Commonwealth Department of Health, and seeking records describing isolation of a SARS-COV-2 virus directly from a sample taken from a diseased patient. Minister Stephen-Smith has asked me to reply on her behalf.

I am advised that ACT Pathology does not have the ability to isolate the virus from patient samples. Accordingly, I do not believe that the ACT Government holds any records relevant to your request.

Thank you for writing to the Minister about this matter.

Yours sincerely

Bernadette McDonald
Chief Executive Officer
Canberra Health Services

19 March 2021



ACT
Government

**Canberra Health
Services**

Our reference: **FOI21-10**

Ms Mary-Jane Liddicoat



Dear Ms Liddicoat

DECISION ON YOUR ACCESS APPLICATION

I refer to your application under section 30 of the *Freedom of Information Act 2016* (FOI Act), received by ACT Health Directorate (ACTHD) and transferred to Canberra Health Services (CHS) on **Tuesday 9 March 2021**. In accordance with section 57 of the FOI Act, the information you are seeking is in their possession.

This application requested access to:

'I am writing to you on advice from the Australian Department of Health (the Department) to seek clarification on information requested in a Freedom of Information (FOI) request that was sent to the Department.

I am therefore writing to you to on initial advice by the Department of Health to confirm whether you do hold the information requested in the original request to the Department, as shown in attachment "FOI 1937" and pasted again below:

"All records in the possession, custody or control of The Department of Health describing the isolation of a SARS-COV-2 virus, directly from a sample taken from a diseased 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 SARS-COV-2" 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 Department of Health or that pertain to work done by The Department of Health. My request includes any sort of record, for example (but not limited to) any published peer reviewed study that The Department of Health has downloaded or printed."

I am an Information Officer appointed by the Chief Executive Officer of Canberra Health Services (CHS) under section 18 of the FOI Act to deal with access applications made under Part 5 of the Act. CHS was required to provide a decision on your access application by **Thursday 8 April 2021**.

Decisions

ACT Pathology does not have the ability to isolate the virus from patient samples. I am therefore satisfied that in accordance with section 35(1)(b), CHS does not hold any documents relevant to the scope of your request.

Charges

Processing charges are not applicable to this request.

Disclosure Log

Under section 28 of the FOI Act, CHS maintains an online record of access applications called a disclosure log. The scope of your access application, my decision and documents released to you will be published in the disclosure log not less than three days but not more than 10 days after the date of this decision. Your personal contact details will not be published.

<https://www.health.act.gov.au/about-our-health-system/freedom-information/disclosure-log>.

Ombudsman review

My decision on your access request is a reviewable decision as identified in Schedule 3 of the FOI Act. You have the right to seek Ombudsman review of this outcome under section 73 of the Act within 20 working days from the day that my decision is published in ACT Health's disclosure log, or a longer period allowed by the Ombudsman.

If you wish to request a review of my decision you may write to the Ombudsman at:

The ACT Ombudsman

GPO Box 442

CANBERRA ACT 2601

Via email: ACTFOI@ombudsman.gov.au

Website: ombudsman.act.gov.au

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) review

Under section 84 of the Act, if a decision is made under section 82(1) on an Ombudsman review, you may apply to the ACAT for review of the Ombudsman decision. Further information may be obtained from the ACAT at:

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal

Level 4, 1 Moore St

GPO Box 370

Canberra City ACT 2601

Telephone: (02) 6207 1740

<http://www.acat.act.gov.au/>

Further assistance

Should you have any queries in relation to your request, please do not hesitate to contact the FOI Coordinator on (02) 5124 9831 or email HealthFOI@act.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Dr Nick Coatsworth

Executive Director of Medical Services

Canberra Health Services

22 March 2021

Rebecca Ewert <r.ewert@auckland.ac.nz>

Wed, Sep 9, 2020 at 2:31 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your request of 7 September 2020 below. I understand you have made similar requests to other units within the University. For the purposes of the Official Information Act, the University is one organisation and accordingly all requests for official information are managed centrally. Could you send all your requests for official information under the Official Information Act to my email address, r.ewert@auckland.ac.nz, or to the generic address legal@auckland.ac.nz. The University will respond to your requests as soon as reasonably practicable, but no longer than 20 working days after receipt, in accordance with the Act.

Yours sincerely,

Rebecca Ewert

General Counsel

University of Auckland

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Monday, 7 September 2020 12:54 PM

To: Peter Hunter <p.hunter@auckland.ac.nz>

Subject: OIA Request: re Isolation of SARS-COV-2

This is an Official Information Act Request to Auckland University's 'Auckland Bioengineering Institute'.

Description of Requested Records:

All records in the possession, custody or control of Auckland Bioengineering Institute describing the isolation of a SARS-COV-2 virus, directly from a sample taken from a diseased 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 SARS-COV-2" 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 Auckland Bioengineering Institute or that pertain to work done by Auckland Bioengineering Institute. My request includes any sort of record, for example (but not limited to) any published peer-reviewed study that Auckland Bioengineering Institute 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).

I will accept PDFs or links to PDFs.

King Regards

--

Rebecca Ewert <r.ewert@auckland.ac.nz>

Thu, Sep 17, 2020 at 2:34 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your requests of 7 September 2020. The University's response follows:

"All records in the possession, custody or control of Auckland Bioengineering Institute describing the isolation of a SARS-COV-2 virus, directly from a sample taken from a diseased 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 also note that my request is not limited to records that were authored by Auckland Bioengineering Institute or that pertain to work done by Auckland Bioengineering Institute. My request includes any sort of record, for example (but not limited to) any published peer-reviewed study that Auckland Bioengineering Institute has downloaded or printed."

No such records have been authored by Auckland Bioengineering Institute staff or pertain to work done by Auckland Bioengineering Institute staff. Your request for these documents is refused under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act 1982, as the requested documents do not exist. Your request for any other such records – including published studies by third parties that Auckland Bioengineering Institute staff have downloaded or printed – would require substantial collation or research to provide, and unless this part of your request is amended or withdrawn the University would likely refuse it under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act. Please advise by 24 September 2020 whether you wish to amend or withdraw this part of your request.

"All records in the possession, custody or control of Auckland University's Science Department describing the isolation of a SARS-COV-2 virus, directly from a sample taken from a diseased 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 also note that my request is not limited to records that were authored by Auckland University's Science Department or that pertain to work done by Auckland University's Science Department. My request includes any sort of record, for example (but not limited to) any published peer-reviewed study that Auckland University's Science Department has downloaded or printed."

No such records have been authored by University staff in the Faculty of Science or pertain to work done by staff in the Faculty of Science. Your request for these documents is refused under section 18(e) of the Official Information Act 1982, as the requested documents do not exist. Your request for any other such records – including published studies by third parties that University staff in the Faculty of Science have downloaded or printed – would require substantial collation or research to provide, and unless this part of your request is amended or withdrawn the University would likely refuse it under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act. Please advise by 24 September 2020 whether you wish to amend or withdraw this part of your request.

You have the right to make a complaint to an Ombudsman if you are dissatisfied with this response.

[Quoted text hidden]

Fri, Sep 18, 2020 at 8:25 AM

Reply-To: [REDACTED]
To: Rebecca Ewert <r.ewert@auckland.ac.nz>

Dear Rebecca,

"Your request for any other such records – including published studies by third parties that Auckland Bioengineering Institute staff have downloaded or printed – would require substantial collation or research to provide..."

"Your request for any other such records – including published studies by third parties that University staff in the Faculty of Science have downloaded or printed – would require substantial collation or research to provide..."

The first sentence of my request reads "*All records in the possession, custody or control of Auckland Bioengineering Institute ...*" and "*All records in the possession, custody or control of Auckland University's Science Department describing the isolation of a SARS-COV-2 virus*".

I have clearly **not** requested the University of Auckland to conduct research or do a literature search on the topic.

Given that:

- devastating lockdown measures have been imposed based on reports of "confirmed COVID-19 cases" and "COVID-19 deaths" said to be caused by a novel coronavirus called "SARS-COV-2", and
- isolation is one of the essential steps in determining scientifically whether a suspected pathogen causes any disease, and
- The Bioengineering Lab claims to have designed face shields that "... provide another layer of protection, to be worn over surgical face masks, to reduce the viral load that healthcare workers can be exposed to." (<https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/abi/our-research/covid-19-research/face-shield-fast-effective-protection/about-our-face-shields.html>), and
- The Bioengineering Lab are researching the modeling of transmission and infection which would require background research (<https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/abi/our-research/covid-19-research/covid-19-modelling-at-abi.html>), and
- The Bioengineering Lab is actively recruiting staff to research SARS-COV-2/COVID-19 (<https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/abi/our-research/covid-19-research/join-abi.html>)

I would expect scientists and engineers at the University who are doing COVID-19 research to have all responsive records at their fingertips.

Thus I am **not** amending my request, and I look forward to the University's final, formal response.

Can I also please have the University's response in a signed PDF?

Thank you

[Quoted text hidden]

Rebecca Ewert <r.ewert@auckland.ac.nz>

Fri, Sep 18, 2020 at 4:16 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your email of 18 September 2020.

"The first sentence of my request reads *"All records in the possession, custody or control of Auckland Bioengineering Institute ..."* and *"All records in the possession, custody or control of Auckland University's Science Department describing the isolation of a SARS-COV-2 virus"*.

I have clearly **not** requested the University of Auckland to conduct research or do a literature search on the topic."

Section 18(f) of the Official Information Act allows requests for official information to be refused where "the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research". "Research" here means the work in finding the requested information held by the University; it does not mean conducting research to obtain new information (as the Official Information Act only applies to official information held by organisations). "Collation" refers to bringing the requested information together.

I note that you have identified particular projects which are of interest to you. If you wish to amend your request to be limited to records held by staff carrying out specified projects, so that we can narrow the search to a small number of staff, rather than records held by the Science Faculty and the Bioengineering Institute, then we may be able to proceed with your request rather than refuse it under section 18(f) as requiring substantial collation or research. Please advise whether you wish to amend your request in this way.

You should be aware, however, that if the substantial collation or research issue is addressed there are other potential issues which may result in all or part of your request being refused. For example:

1. The definition of "official information" excludes library material held for reference purposes, and this may exclude material obtained from our Library databases by our researchers.
2. Providing the requested material may breach agreements under which the material was supplied; for example, journal articles are copyright material and it may breach the University's licensing agreements with publishers to provide these to you.

Yours sincerely,

Rebecca Ewert

General Counsel

University of Auckland

Fri, Sep 18, 2020 at 4:44 PM

Reply-To: [REDACTED]
To: Rebecca Ewert <r.ewert@auckland.ac.nz>

Greetings Rebecca,

"Section 18(f) of the Official Information Act allows requests for official information to be refused where "the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research". "Research" here means the work in finding the requested information held by the University; it does not mean conducting research to obtain new information (as the Official Information Act only applies to official information held by organisations). "Collation" refers to bringing the requested information together.

I note that you have identified particular projects which are of interest to you. If you wish to amend your request to be limited to records held by staff carrying out specified projects, so that we can narrow the search to a small number of staff, rather than records held by the Science Faculty and the Bioengineering Institute, then we may be able to proceed with your request rather than refuse it under section 18(f) as requiring substantial collation or research. Please advise whether you wish to amend your request in this way."

I have submitted and received responses from many organizations from the UK, Australia, and New Zealand. None of these organizations had any problem with responding. For instance, I submitted an OIA to the New Zealand Ministry of Health. Not only did the Ministry respond but they also inquired with ESR. ESR responded that they too did not have any responsive records.

I assume that each university department has an email list; it surely doesn't require 'research' to send an email to such lists. I hardly think that 'substantial collation' is required for reading the email responses and summarizing those responses. But maybe you can ask The Ministry of Health for help in responding to this request?

You should be aware, however, that if the substantial collation or research issue is addressed there are other potential issues which may result in all or part of your request being refused. For example:

1. The definition of "official information" excludes library material held for reference purposes, and this may exclude material obtained from our Library databases by our researchers.
2. Providing the requested material may breach agreements under which the material was supplied; for example, journal articles are copyright material and it may breach the University's licensing agreements with publishers to provide these to you.

I understand that my OIA is for publicly available information.

I would be extremely surprised if the most important research of our lifetime is hidden away behind a paywall. Again, none of the other organizations mentioned paywalls or IP issues when responding to my requests.

I won't be modifying my OIA as the Ministry of Health had no trouble providing a response of 18(e) as they had no records. I will certainly object to a response with an 18(f) rejection with the Ombudsmen as The Ministry of Health responded which has already set the precedence for this OIA request if you decide to go this route.

Regards

[Quoted text hidden]

Landon Watt <landon.watt@auckland.ac.nz>

Tue, Oct 6, 2020 at 8:40 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your email of 18 September 2020, which clarifies that your Official Information Act request is for publicly available information. Accordingly, to the extent that the University holds the requested information, your request is refused under section 18(d) of the Official Information Act, on the basis that the information requested is publicly available. You have the right to make a complaint to an Ombudsman if you are dissatisfied with this response.

Yours sincerely,

Landon Watt
Legal Advisor

Office of the Vice Chancellor
University of Auckland

[REDACTED]

Tue, Oct 6, 2020 at 8:51 PM

To: Landon Watt <landon.watt@auckland.ac.nz>

Greeting Landon Watt,
Can you please provide links to the publicly available information according to 18(d) that satisfies my OIA request?
If you fail to provide this information, then I will be left with no other choice but to file against the university for fraudulently refusing my request.

Thank you.
[Quoted text hidden]

Official Information Act Request: re Isolation of SARS-COV-2

5 messages

Mon, Nov 2, 2020 at 12:03 PM

To: oiarequest@bopdhb.govt.nz

This is an Official Information Act Request to the Bay of Plenty District Health Board.

Description of Requested Records:

All records in the possession, custody or control of the Bay of Plenty District Health Board describing the isolation of a SARS-COV-2 virus, directly from a sample taken from a diseased 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 SARS-COV-2" 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 Bay of Plenty District Health Board or that pertain to work done by the Bay of Plenty District Health Board. My request includes any sort of record, for example (but not limited to) any published peer-reviewed study that the Bay of Plenty District Health Board 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).

I will accept PDFs or links to PDFs.

Kind Regards

--

OIA Request - Isolation of SARS-COV-2

Maria Moller <Maria.Moller@bopdhb.govt.nz>

Fri, Nov 13, 2020 at 4:34 PM

On behalf of Debbie Brown, Senior Advisor Governance and Quality

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your request of 2 November 2020.

Pursuant to clause 18(e) of the Official Information Act, the BOPDHB cannot provide this information on the grounds that the question refers to a practice that is not undertaken by our DHB, therefore the information does not exist at the BOPDHB.

Kind regards.

Maria Moller

PA to Senior Advisor Governance & Quality

Governance & Quality / CEO Office

Bay of Plenty District Health Board | Tauranga Hospital | Cameron Road | Private Bag 12024 | Tauranga 3143

T: 07 579 8545 | E: maria.moller@bopdhb.govt.nz | W: www.bopdhb.govt.nz



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21 January 2021

Official Information Act Requests: Isolation of viruses on the New Zealand immunisation schedule, SARS-CoV-1 and vaccines

This letter serves as a response to your three requests for information sent to ESR under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

Your first request, received by ESR on 18 December 2020, was a follow-up to a previous request which we treated as a new request. This request was as follows:

"Clearly, I am not asking for records relating to the culturing of something which is all that you have provided.

According to my OIA request, I am specifically asking for the isolation of the viruses on the immunisation schedule. Isolation again means the separation of a thing from everything else. The common isolation methods for particles from 30nm and up are:

- *ultra centrifugation*
- *ultra filtration*
- *precipitation*
- *immunoaffinity*

Culturing is not an isolation method, it's a "growing" method.

Please revise your response to me based on the criteria which I described in my original OIA request: that of which is the isolation of the virus NOT the culturing of something."

Your second request, received by ESR on 11 January 2021, was as follows:

"All records in the possession, custody or control of ESR describing the isolation of a SARS-COV-1 virus as well as any of the other common cold associated coronavirus, directly from a sample taken from a diseased 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 SARS-COV-1 or any of the other common cold associated coronavirus" 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 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)."

Your third request, received by ESR on 11 January 2021, was as follows:

"All records in the possession, custody or control of ESR describing the inoculation of the isolated/purified vaccine on human host cells, the inoculated host cells then exposed to isolated/purified SARS-COV-2 virus, and then proof that the immunised cells resisted disease from the isolated/purified SARS-COV-2 virus.

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. So the experiment must only apply isolated and purified vaccines and isolated and purified viruses to the human host cells. The experiment must not mix anything that would contaminate the results like Antibiotics, Antifungals, and Fetal Bovine Serum.

Please also note that my request is not limited to records that were authored by 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)."

Our response to your requests:

In common microbiological usage 'isolate' is understood to mean a pure growth of a bacteria or virus in an appropriate growth medium e.g.

- a pure bacterial growth on agar or in a broth
- a pure viral growth cultured in a broth of living cells (viruses generally only grow within living cells like the Vero cells mentioned above).

The terms 'isolation' and 'culturing' are often used interchangeably. Using the definition of 'isolation' that you refer to in your requests, ESR does not hold any records describing 'isolation' of viruses on the New Zealand vaccination schedule, SARS-CoV-1 or vaccines.

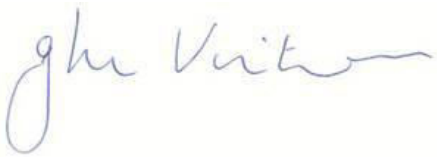
We cannot provide papers that staff in ESR have downloaded or printed which may apply to your requests using your definition of 'isolation' as the information cannot be made available without substantial collation or research pursuant to section 18(f) of the Act. We have considered section 18A of the Act and consider that even if we were to charge you for the time to check and collate any relevant materials and extend the timeframe of the request, this would still unduly affect our team who are supporting New Zealand's COVID-19 response work.

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jill Vintiner', is positioned above the printed name.

Jill Vintiner

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

9 March 2021



Official Information Act Request: Purification of SARS-CoV-2

On 2 March 2021 you sent a request under the Official Information Act 1982 ("Act") to ESR as follows:

"All studies and/or reports in the possession, custody or control of ESR describing the purification of "SARS-COV-2" said to have caused disease in humans (via maceration, filtration and use of an ultracentrifuge; also referred to at times by some people as "isolation"), directly from a sample taken from a diseased human, where the patient sample was not first combined with any other source of genetic material (i.e. monkey kidney cells aka Vero cells; fetal bovine serum).

Please note that I am not requesting studies/reports where researchers failed to purify the suspected "virus" and instead:

- *cultured an unpurified sample or other unpurified substance, and/or*
- *performed an amplification test (i.e. a PCR test) on all the RNA from a patient sample or from a cell culture, or on genetic material from any unpurified substance, and/or*
- *sequenced the total RNA from a patient sample or from a cell culture or from any unpurified substance, and/or*
- *produced electron microscopy images of unpurified things.*

For further clarity, please note I am already aware that according to virus theory a "virus" requires host cells in order to replicate, and I am not requesting records describing the replication of a "virus" without host cells.

Further, I am not requesting records that describe a suspected "virus" floating in a vacuum; I am simply requesting records that describe its purification (separation from everything else in the patient sample, as per standard laboratory practices for the purification of other small things).

Please also note that my request is not limited to records that were authored by ESR or that pertain to work done at/by ESR. Rather, my request includes any record matching the above description, for example (but not limited to) any published peer-reviewed study authored by anyone, anywhere, ever that has been downloaded or printed by ESR and possibly (but not necessarily) relied on as evidence of a disease-causing "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."

Our response to your request:

Using the definition of 'purification' that you refer to in your request, ESR does not hold any records describing 'purification' of SARS-CoV-2.

We cannot provide papers that staff in ESR have downloaded or printed which may apply to your request using your definition of 'purification' as the information cannot be made available without substantial collation or research pursuant to section 18(f) of the Act. We have considered section 18A of the Act and consider that even if we were to charge you for the time to check and collate any relevant materials and extend the timeframe of the request, this would still unduly affect our team who are supporting New Zealand's COVID-19 response work.

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**

Hon Julie Anne Genter

Minister for Women

Associate Minister of Transport

Associate Minister of Health

Minita mō ngā Wāhine

Minita Tuarua mō ngā Take Waka

Minita Tuarua mō te Manatū Hauora



Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the office of the Associate Minister of Health on 15 October 2020 for:

"All records in the possession, custody or control of the Associate Minister of Health Hon Julie Anne Genter describing the isolation of a SARS-COV-2 virus, directly from a sample taken from a diseased 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 SARS-COV-2" 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 Associate Minister of Health Hon Julie Anne Genter or that pertain to work done by the Associate Minister of Health Hon Julie Anne Genter. My request includes any sort of record, for example (but not limited to) any published peer-reviewed study that the Associate Minister of Health Hon Julie Anne Genter 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)."

This office does not hold any information pertaining to your request. For this reason, I am refusing your request under section 18(e) of the Act, as the information requested does not exist.

Under section 28(3) of the Act you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review my decision to refuse your request.

Yours sincerely

Hon Julie Anne Genter

Associate Minister of Health

Office of Hon Peeni Henare

MP for Tāmaki Makaurau

Minister of Civil Defence

Minister for Whānau Ora

Minister for Youth

Associate Minister of Health (Māori Health)

Associate Minister of Tourism



By email:

Ref:

H202007852

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the office of the Associate Minister of Health on 15 October 2020 for:

"All records in the possession, custody or control of the Associate Minister of Health Hon Peeni Henare describing the isolation of a SARS-COV-2 virus, directly from a sample taken from a diseased 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 SARS-COV-2" refers instead to:

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

This office does not hold any information pertaining to your request. For this reason, I am refusing your request under section 18(e) of the Act, as the information requested does not exist.

Under section 28(3) of the Act you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review my decision to refuse your request.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Elly Amiri'.

Elly Amiri
Senior Private Secretary
Office of Hon Peeni Henare

7 August 2020

[REDACTED]
By email: [REDACTED]
Ref: H202005599

Dear [REDACTED]

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) on 30 July 2020 to the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) for:

"All records in the possession, custody or control of the Ministry of Health describing the isolation of a SARS-COV-2 virus, directly from a sample taken from a diseased 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 SARS-COV-2" 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 The Ministry of Health or that pertain to work done by the Ministry of Health. My request includes any sort of record, for example (but not limited to) any published peer-reviewed study that the Ministry of Health 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)."

The Ministry does not hold records that describe the isolation of a SARS-COV-2 virus. As such, we are refusing this request under section 18(e) of the Act. The Institute of Environmental Science and Research (ESR), has provided scientific expertise to support the national response to COVID-19 on behalf of the Ministry, primarily in health intelligence and diagnostic testing.

We contacted ESR, on your behalf, to ask if they held any information within the scope of your request. ESR confirmed they do not hold any information in scope of your request. As such, we have decided not to transfer your request to ESR.

Under section 28(3) of the Act you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry website

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Nick Allan', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Nick Allan
Manager, OIA Services
Office of the Director-General



20 October 2020

Ref: 20-317

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the office of the Associate Minister of Health on 15 October 2020 for:

"All records in the possession, custody or control of the Associate Minister of Health Hon Jenny Salesa describing the isolation of a SARS-COV-2 virus, directly from a sample taken from a diseased 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 SARS-COV-2" 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 Associate Minister of Health Hon Jenny Salesa or that pertain to work done by the Associate Minister of Health Hon Jenny Salesa. My request includes any sort of record, for example (but not limited to) any published peer-reviewed study that the Associate Minister of Health Hon Jenny Salesa 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)."

This office does not hold any information pertaining to your request. For this reason, I am refusing your request under section 18(e) of the Act, as the information requested does not exist.

Under section 28(3) of the Act you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review my decision to refuse your request.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jenny Salesa', written over a horizontal line.

Hon Jenny Salesa
Associate Minister of Health

26 August 2021

By email: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Official Information Act Request: SARS-CoV-2 purification by any method

On 18 August 2021 you sent a request for information under the Official Information Act 1982 to ESR as follows:

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

Please note: this request is very similar to another request ESR responded to in March, 2021 where I had specified purification via maceration, filtration and use of an ultracentrifuge. The difference with this new request is that it does not specify maceration, filtration and use of an ultracentrifuge; it only mentions filtration, ultracentrifugation and chromatography by way of an example. My request also includes the language of 'variants' to ensure that records would match all related alleged SARS-COV-2 viruses.

Description of Requested Records:

All studies and/or reports in the possession, custody or control of ESR describing the purification of any "COVID-19 virus" (aka "SARS-COV-2", including any alleged "variants" i.e. "B.1.1.7", "B.1.351", "P.1") (for example: via filtration, ultracentrifugation and chromatography), directly from a sample taken from a diseased human where the patient sample was not first combined with any other source of genetic material (i.e. monkey kidney cells aka Vero cells; fetal bovine serum).

Please note that I am not requesting studies/reports where researchers failed to purify the suspected "virus" and instead:

- cultured an unpurified sample or other unpurified substance, and/or*
- performed an amplification test (i.e. a PCR test) on all the RNA from a patient sample or from a cell culture, or on genetic material from any unpurified substance, and/or*
- fabricated a "genome" by editing/assembling/aligning sequences detected in the total RNA from a patient sample or from a cell culture or from any unpurified substance, and/or*
- produced electron microscopy images of unpurified things.*

For further clarity, please note I am already aware that according to virus theory a "virus" requires host cells in order to replicate, and I am not requesting records describing the replication of a "virus" without host cells.

Further, I am not requesting records that describe a suspected "virus" floating in a vacuum; I am simply requesting records that describe its purification (separation from everything else in the patient sample, as per standard laboratory practices for the purification of other very small things).

Please also note that my request is not limited to records that were authored by ESR or that pertain to work done at/by ESR. Rather, my request includes any record matching the above description, for example (but not limited to): any published peer-reviewed study authored by anyone, anywhere, ever that has been downloaded or printed by ESR and relied on as evidence of a disease-causing "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."

Our response to your request:

Using the definition of 'purification' that you refer to in your request, ESR does not hold any records describing 'purification' of SARS-CoV-2.

We cannot provide papers that staff in ESR have downloaded or printed which may apply to your request using your definition of 'purification' as the information cannot be made available without substantial collation or research pursuant to section 18(f) of the Act. We have considered section 18A of the Act and consider that even if we were to charge you for the time to check and collate any relevant materials and extend the timeframe of the request, this would still unduly affect our team who are supporting New Zealand's COVID-19 response work.

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**

18 November 2020

By email: [REDACTED]
Ref: H202007576

Dear [REDACTED]

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) on 5 October 2020 for information relating to Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).

Under the Act, I will respond to each part of your request in turn.

1. *A valid peer reviewed empirical scientific study, confirming the identification, using either Koch's postulates or River's protocol, by isolation, visualisation and purification of SARS CoV-2 and/or Covid-19*

The following steps have been undertaken to provide assurance that SARS-CoV-2 is the virus that causes the severe respiratory illness known as COVID-19.

1. The full genome of the virus was sequenced which has enabled accurate identification of the type of virus as a coronavirus. Its RNA genome provides a way to explore its evolutionary links to other coronaviruses.
2. Culture of the virus (within a laboratory setting) was performed confirming the ability of the virus to infect and replicate in human cells.
3. Cell culture studies all demonstrated that the virus is able to cause damage to human cells (called the cytopathogenic effect or CPE)
4. Virus that is grown in culture is able to infect animals and cause disease.

Further information about studies into SARS-CoV-2 (with reference to Koch's postulates) can be found at the following link: www.biorxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.02.07.939389v3.full.

2. *Scientific proof that an accurate diagnostic test is being used to identify a virus or disease (SARS CoV-2 and/or Covid-19) and not just RNA sequences, or Chromosome 8.*

The coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 has an RNA genome, therefore by definition it is "an RNA sequence". The published genome of the virus is distinct from other viruses and can easily be differentiated from Chromosome 8 if you are referring to the human genome. The 'scientific proof' is that the Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test that has been designed to detect SARS-CoV-2 has been validated by labs around the globe to be specific for the viral target and not other genomic sequences. PCR tests have been sequenced to ensure they detect the intended target. The Institute of Environmental Science and Research (ESR) maintains the end-to-end system for testing, validating, analysing and reporting on COVID-19 in New Zealand. Further information on ESR's testing and validations can be found at the following link: <https://www.esr.cri.nz/our-services/testing/novel-coronavirus/>

3. Proof that any test in use (Covid-19) has been compared to a gold standard.

A 'gold standard' test is used in a laboratory setting to identify the best available test at the time. It is important to recognise that there is no perfect test. Each test will have been explored for its sensitivity and specificity.

In relation to COVID-19, the RT-qPCR test for viral RNA is considered as 'gold standard'. This test has been validated by several means including as a purified virus. However, the most definitive comparison is when PCR's are sequenced as they are mapped to the SARS-CoV-2 viral genome. This mapping is definitive proof that the test is picking up the target SARS-CoV-2 and no other samples.

Further information relating to SARS-CoV-2 and Koch's postulates is attached to this letter as Appendix One.

I trust this information fulfils your request. Under section 28(3) of the Act you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry's website.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rebecca Drew', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Rebecca Drew
Group Manager, COVID-19 Science and Insights
COVID-19 Health System Response

SARS-CoV-2 is the virus that causes COVID-19

The science behind the association of a specific microorganism with a specific disease has evolved considerably since Koch's postulates were published. Changes to the concept of infectious diseases, the role that host immunity plays in the development of symptomatology, and the revolution in laboratory testing and genome sequencing have replaced the requirement for infectious agents to cause disease in healthy humans in order to prove causation. Taken together, there is an overwhelming body of evidence (including satisfying Koch's postulates) that the disease known as COVID-19 is caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

The relationship between SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19

In late 2019 a cluster of cases of severe pneumonia in Wuhan, China, was identified through a local severe illness reporting system which was set up after the SARS outbreak. On 31 December the WHO China country office was informed of the cases and on 3 January 2020, 44 cases of pneumonia of unknown cause were reported of whom 11 were very ill. At that time the infectious agent had not been identified. Respiratory samples from the symptomatic individuals were tested and a corona virus, similar to SARS-CoV was identified in all the patients. The virus was named SARS-CoV-2. The following steps have been undertaken to provide assurance that SARS-CoV-2 is the virus that causes the severe respiratory illness known as COVID-19.

- The full genome of the virus was sequenced which has enabled accurate identification of the type of virus as a coronavirus. Its RNA genome provides a way to explore its evolutionary links to other coronaviruses.
- Culture of the virus (within a laboratory setting) was performed confirming the ability of the virus to infect and replicate in human cells.
- Cell culture studies all demonstrated that the virus is able to cause damage to human cells (called the cytopathogenic effect or CPE).

- Virus that is grown in culture is able to infect animals and cause disease.

Koch's Postulates

Approximately 200 years ago, a German physician named Robert Koch proposed that four conditions were required to demonstrate the causal relationship between a particular microorganism and disease.

These became known as Koch's postulates, which are as follows:

1. The microorganism must be found in diseased but not healthy individuals;
2. The microorganism must be cultured from the diseased individual;
3. Inoculation of a healthy individual with the cultured microorganism must recapitulated the disease; and finally
4. The microorganism must be re-isolated from the inoculated, diseased individual and matched to the original microorganism.

These criteria were further updated in 1937 by Rivers for viral diseases to allow for the fact that viruses are unable to survive without a host [\[1\]](#).

1. Regarding the first postulate, the concept of an infectious agent has markedly changed over the last 100+ years. In particular it is increasingly recognised that different individuals will have different responses to a particular micro-organism. While some people develop a life threatening illness, others will remain without symptoms from a given illness. Koch himself recognised that there were asymptomatic cases of cholera. The risk of becoming ill from a particular microorganism then becomes a matter of probabilities, not an "all or none" phenomenon, as originally implied in Koch's postulates. Although not all individuals will develop symptoms of COVID-19, any individual infected with SARS-CoV-2 (asymptomatic or not) is able to pass the virus on to other individuals.

2. Most viruses can be cultured in specifically designed laboratory 'medium' that promotes their growth. Because viruses require a host cells to grow and reproduce, the type of cell required for culture will vary. However, viruses are not always easy to grow in culture and therefore to identify the presence of virus other means may be used which are more rapid, reliable and cost-effective. In particular, genetic tests are often used to identify sections of RNA which are unique to a specific virus.
3. The inoculation of a potentially deadly virus into healthy individuals is unnecessary to identify a particular virus as the cause of a disease. This step in Koch's postulates is usually determined by the observation of natural infection in groups of individuals, in cell culture or in animals. However, human challenge studies are being undertaken in young health individuals in order to accelerate the development of vaccines [2] and fulfils the third postulate.
4. The identification of the same virus in groups of infected individuals (clusters), as identified by genomic testing validates this point.

Supporting information/evidence

[1] Rivers TM. Viruses and Koch's Postulates. J Bacteriol. 1937;33(1):1-12. PubMed PMID: 16559982.

[2] Eyal N, Lipsitch M, Smith PG. Human Challenge Studies to Accelerate Coronavirus Vaccine Licensure. The Journal of Infectious Diseases. 2020;221(11):1752-6.

OIA request to MOH re: "SARS-COV-2" purification by any method

Wed, Aug 18, 2021 at 1:11 PM

To: OIA Requests <oiaagr@health.govt.nz>

Dear Official Information Officer,

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

Please note: this request is very similar to another request MOH responded to in March, 2021 where I had **specified** purification *via maceration, filtration and use of an ultracentrifuge*. The difference with this new request is that it does **not specify** maceration, filtration and use of an ultracentrifuge; it only mentions filtration, ultracentrifugation and chromatography by way of an example. My request also includes the language of 'variants' to ensure that records would match all related alleged SARS-COV-2 viruses.

Description of Requested Records:

All studies and/or reports in the possession, custody or control of the NZ Ministry of Health describing the **purification** of any "COVID-19 virus" (aka "SARS-COV-2", including any alleged "variants" i.e. "B.1.1.7", "B.1.351", "P.1") (for example: via filtration, ultracentrifugation and chromatography), directly from a sample taken from a diseased human where the patient sample was not first combined with any other source of **genetic** material (i.e. monkey kidney cells aka Vero cells; fetal bovine serum).

Please note that I am not requesting studies/reports where researchers failed to **purify** the suspected "virus" and instead:

- cultured an unpurified sample or other unpurified substance, and/or
- performed an amplification test (i.e. a PCR test) on all the RNA from a patient sample or from a cell culture, or on genetic material from any unpurified substance, and/or
- fabricated a "genome" by editing/assembling/aligning sequences detected in the total RNA from a patient sample or from a cell culture or from any unpurified substance, and/or
- produced electron microscopy images of unpurified things.

For further clarity, please note I am already aware that according to virus theory a "virus" requires host cells in order to replicate, and I am **not** requesting records describing the **replication** of a "virus" without host cells.

Further, I am **not** requesting records that describe a suspected "virus" floating in a vacuum; I am simply requesting records that describe its **purification** (**separation** from everything else in the patient sample, as per standard laboratory practices for the purification of other very small things).

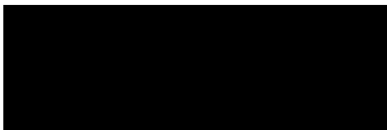
Please also note that my request is **not limited** to records that were authored by the NZ Ministry of Health or that pertain to work done at/by the NZ Ministry of Health. Rather, my request includes any record matching the above description, for example (but not limited to): any published peer-reviewed study authored by anyone, anywhere, ever that has been downloaded or printed by the NZ Ministry of Health and relied on as evidence of a disease-causing "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.

Regards



Your request for official information (ref: H202110807)

OIA Requests <oiagr@health.govt.nz>

Mon, Aug 23, 2021 at 3:34 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Kia ora [REDACTED]

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) received on 18 August 2021 for:

*"All studies and/or reports in the possession, custody or control of the NZ Ministry of Health describing the **purification** of any **"COVID-19 virus"** (aka **"SARS-COV-2"**, including any alleged **"variants"** i.e. **"B.1.1.7"**, **"B.1.351"**, **"P.1"**) (for example: via filtration, ultracentrifugation and chromatography), directly from a sample taken from a diseased human where the patient sample was not first combined with any other source of **genetic** material (i.e. monkey kidney cells aka Vero cells; fetal bovine serum).*

*Please note that I am not requesting studies/reports where researchers failed to **purify** the suspected "virus" and instead:*

- cultured an unpurified sample or other unpurified substance, and/or*
- performed an amplification test (i.e. a PCR test) on all the RNA from a patient sample or from a cell culture, or on genetic material from any unpurified substance, and/or*
- fabricated a "genome" by editing/assembling/aligning sequences detected in the total RNA from a patient sample or from a cell culture or from any unpurified substance, and/or*
- produced electron microscopy images of unpurified things.*

*For further clarity, please note I am already aware that according to virus theory a "virus" requires host cells in order to replicate, and I am **not** requesting records describing the **replication** of a "virus" without host cells.*

*Further, I am **not** requesting records that describe a suspected "virus" floating in a vacuum; I am simply requesting records that describe its **purification** (**separation** from everything else in the patient sample, as per standard laboratory practices for the purification of other very small things).*

*Please also note that my request is **not limited** to records that were authored by the NZ Ministry of Health or that pertain to work done at/by the NZ Ministry of Health. Rather, my request includes any record matching the above description, for example (but not limited to): any published peer-reviewed study authored by anyone, anywhere, ever that has been downloaded or printed by the NZ Ministry of Health and relied on as evidence of a disease-causing "virus".*

The Ministry does not hold any information, authored by any party, in relation to your request. The Ministry has also confirmed that Institute of Environmental Science and Research (ESR) does not hold any information relating to your request.

Therefore, your request is refused under section 18(g)(i) as the information requested is not held by the Ministry and there are no grounds for believing it is held by another agency subject to the Act.

Please be aware that should you make further requests for the same information the Ministry may refuse your requests under section 18(h) of the Act, as they may be considered frivolous or vexatious.

Under section 28(3) of the Act you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi,



Nick Allan
Manager OIA Services

Statement of confidentiality: This e-mail message and any accompanying attachments may contain information that is IN-CONFIDENCE and subject to legal privilege.

If you are not the intended recipient, do not read, use, disseminate, distribute or copy this message or attachments.

If you have received this message in error, please notify the sender immediately and delete this message.

25 August 2021

[REDACTED]
By email: [REDACTED]
Ref: H202110807

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) on 18 August 2021 for:

"All studies and/or reports in the possession, custody or control of the NZ Ministry of Health describing the purification of any "COVID-19 virus" (aka "SARS-COV-2", including any alleged "variants" i.e. "B.1.1.7", "B.1.351", "P.1") (for example: via filtration, ultracentrifugation and chromatography), directly from a sample taken from a diseased human where the patient sample was not first combined with any other source of genetic material (i.e. monkey kidney cells aka Vero cells; fetal bovine serum)."

The Ministry does not hold any information, authored by any party, in relation to your request. The Ministry has also confirmed that Institute of Environmental Science and Research (ESR) does not hold any information relating to your request.

Therefore, your request is refused under section 18(g)(i) of the Act as the information requested is not held by the Ministry and there are no grounds for believing it is held by another agency subject to the Act.

Please be aware that should you make further requests for the same information the Ministry may refuse your requests under section 18(h) of the Act, as they may be considered frivolous or vexatious.

Under section 28(3) of the Act you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā



Nick Allan

**Manager OIA Services
Office of the Director General**

133 Molesworth Street
PO Box 5013
Wellington 6140
New Zealand
T+64 4 496 2000

10/02/2021

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Ref: H20210057
[REDACTED]

Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) on 5 January 2021 for:

You specifically requested:

"All records in the possession, custody or control of the Ministry of Health describing the isolation of a SARS-COV-1 virus as well as any of the other common cold associated coronavirus, directly from a sample taken from a diseased 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 SARS-COV-1 or any of the other common cold associated coronavirus" 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 Ministry of Health or that pertain to work done by the Ministry of Health. My request includes any sort of record, for example (but not limited to) any published peer-reviewed study that the Ministry of Health 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).

Peer-reviewed scientific literature is publicly available from databases such as PubMed or Scopus. Please note it is not possible to compile a conclusive list of the number of occasions information relevant to the scope of your request may have been downloaded, accessed or

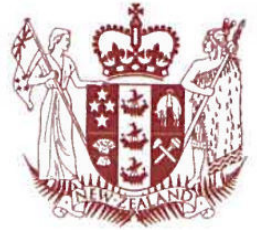
printed to respond, and any information held would likely be incomplete. There is no obligation on the Ministry to create information in order to respond to a request. The Act only applies to information that is already held the Ministry of Health (the Ministry). Therefore, as the information you are seeking is not held by the Ministry, I am refusing your request under section 18(g) of the Act.

Under section 28(3) of the Act you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gill Hall', written in a cursive style.

Gill Hall
Group Manager
COVID-19 Science and Insights
COVID-19 Health System Response Directorate



23 APR 2021



Ref: PMO 2021-068



Official Information Act request relating to purification of SARS-COV-2

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request, received on 24 March 2021. You requested:

"All studies and/or reports in the possession, custody or control of Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern describing the purification of "SARS-COV-2" said to have caused disease in humans.

My request is not limited to records that were authored by Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern or that pertain to work done at/by Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern. Rather, my request includes any record matching the above description."

I note that your request is seeking the same information as your previous request, which was recently transferred to the Ministry of Health. The Act does not require a response to stay with a specific Minister or agency where it is determined that a more appropriate Minister or agency is best placed to respond to the request. As the Ministry of Health hold scientific information relevant to your request, and is a primary source of expertise when it comes to health, I believe it is best placed to respond to your request, and identify where information was provided to this Office.

The Prime Minister receives information and advice, including in relation to responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, from Ministers, her Chief Science Advisor, and Officials as well as a wide range of other sources. Although this Office does not hold the specific scientific information you are seeking, there is a large volume of publicly available evidence that the virus SARS-COV-2 that causes COVID-19 exists, and refer to my letter of 7 December 2020 which contains material identified by the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor.

Please note that repeat requests for the same information can be refused under section 18(h) of the Act, as frivolous and vexatious. If you wish to request new information, we would be happy to respond.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the Act.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Raj Nahna'.

Raj Nahna
Chief of Staff



9 November 2020

Reference: OIA-2020/21-0182

Official Information Act request relating to the Isolation of the SARS-COV-2 virus

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 10 October 2020. You requested:

"All records in the possession, custody or control of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet describing the isolation of a SARS-COV-2 virus, directly from a sample taken from a diseased 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 SARS-COV-2" 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 Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet or that pertain to work done by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. My request includes any sort of record, for example (but not limited to) any published peer-reviewed study that the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet 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).

I will accept PDFs or links to PDFs."

No specific information has been identified as being held by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) relevant to your request. Accordingly, your request is refused under section 18(e) Act - *"that the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found."*

I would note that the COVID-19 Response Group in DPMC has accessed a large volume of studies since the start of the pandemic and it is possible that some may have had information relevant to the request. However, these would be in public domain and to attempt to identify any such studies would involve substantial collation and research as records of all studies and research accessed by the group have not been retained. Although you may wish to search for this information yourself, for instance using Google Scholar.

Your request was for information in possession, custody or control of DPMC. If you have not done so already, you may wish to pursue your request with the Institute of Environmental Science and Research (ESR) (enquiries@esr.cri.nz) and/or the Ministry of Health (oiagr@health.govt.nz).

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the Act.

We do not intend to publish this response on the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's website.

Yours sincerely



Cheryl Barnes
**Deputy Chief Executive,
COVID-19 Group**



22 September 2021

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I refer to your request for information under the Official Information Act (Act) dated 11 September 2021.

You have requested “All studies and/or reports in the possession, custody or control of University of Otago describing the **purification** of any “**COVID-19 virus**” (aka “**SARS-COV-2**”, including any alleged “**variants**” i.e. “**B.1.1.7**”, “**B.1.351**”, “**P.1**”) (for example: via filtration, ultracentrifugation and chromatography), directly from a sample taken from a diseased human where the patient sample was not first combined with any other source of **genetic** material (i.e. monkey kidney cells aka Vero cells; fetal bovine serum).”

I can confirm that the University holds no records which fall within scope of your request. Accordingly, we decline your request pursuant to section 18(g) of the Act on the basis that the information requested is not held by the University.

We note your right to seek a review of this decision via a complaint to an Ombudsman. However, we would welcome the opportunity to discuss any concerns with you first.

Yours sincerely

Kelsey Kennard
Official Information and Compliance Coordinator
Office of the Registrar



13 October 2021



Official Information request – SARS-COV-2 and Variants purification by any method

I refer to your information request of 22 September 2021. The University of Waikato (**University**) has given due consideration to your request as follows:

“All studies and/or reports in the possession, custody or control of The University of Waikato describing the purification of any “COVID-19 virus” (aka “SARS-COV-2”, including any alleged “variants” i.e. “B.1.1.7”, “B.1.351”, “P.1”) (for example: via filtration, ultracentrifugation and chromatography), directly from a sample taken from a diseased human where the patient sample was not first combined with any other source of genetic material (i.e. monkey kidney cells aka Vero cells; foetal bovine serum)”.

The University advises that there is no research being conducted on the COVID-19 virus by any staff member or student of the University, therefore under section 18 (e) of the Official Information Act 1982 the University refuses the request on the basis that the information requested is not held.

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.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim Mercer'.

Jim Mercer
Chief Operating Officer



OIA: re Isolation of SARS-COV-2

1 message

Tue, Sep 8, 2020 at 11:53 AM

To: mc@otago.ac.nz

This is an Official Information Act Request to The University of Otago.

Description of Requested Records:

All records in the possession, custody or control of The University of Otago describing the isolation of a SARS-COV-2 virus, directly from a sample taken from a diseased 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 SARS-COV-2" 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 University of Otago or that pertain to work done by The University of Otago. My request includes any sort of record, for example (but not limited to) any published peer-reviewed study that The University of Otago 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).

I will accept PDFs or links to PDFs.



6 October 2020



I write in response to your Official Information Act request of 8 September 2020, which sought: "All records in the possession, custody or control of The University of Otago describing the isolation of a SARS-COV-2 virus, directly from a sample taken from a diseased 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)".

I can confirm that the University holds no records which fall within the scope of your request, as SARS-CoV-2 is not isolated in the way you describe. However, I attach a letter from one of our research staff, Professor Miguel E. Quiñones-Mateu, which may be of interest to you. This explains how SARS-CoV-2 is detected and isolated from patient-derived specimens in a laboratory environment.

I trust this information is helpful.

Kind regards



Chris Stoddart
Registrar and Secretary to the Council
University of Otago

October 5, 2020

Professor Richard Blaikie
Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Research & Enterprise
University of Otago

Miguel E. Quiñones-Mateu, Ph.D.
Professor, Webster Family Chair in Viral Pathogenesis
Associate Dean Research
Department of Microbiology & Immunology
School of Biomedical Sciences
University of Otago
PO Box 56
720 Cumberland Street
Dunedin 9016
New Zealand

RE: Information Act Request – Isolation of SARS-CoV-2

Dear Prof Blaikie,

I am writing to briefly describe - on lay terms - the process that we, and basically all virology laboratories across the world, have used to detect and isolate SARS-CoV-2 from patient-derived specimens. As you know, this is a relatively simple and standard procedure used for numerous virology groups to isolate viruses, starting with the first virus to be identified (tobacco mosaic virus, Olitsky & Northrop 1925 *Science* 61:544) as well as the first human virus (Yellow fever virus, Reed et al 1901 *JAMA* 36:431). In the case of SARS-CoV-2, we followed protocols described in the literature to originally isolate the virus in China (Zhu et al 2020 *NEJM* 382:727) and Australia (Caly et al 2020 *Med J Aust* 212:459). Briefly,

- Patient-derived nasopharyngeal (NSP) swabs were collected and stored in universal transport medium (UTM) at 4°C
- UTM aliquots were transported to our laboratory where we (i) used 140 microliters to isolate total RNA and (ii) added 500 microliters to a tissue culture flask containing Vero (*Cercopithecus aethiops*, kidney epithelial) cells
- RNA samples were used to (i) detect SARS-CoV-2 by RT-PCR amplification and (ii) identify all the microorganisms present in the sample using metagenomics sequencing
- Vero cells were closely monitored for cytopathic effects (CPE), usually a sign of viral infection
- Once CPE was observed, the cell-free supernatant from the “positive” culture was collected and total RNA isolated (cell-free supernatant from Vero cells not exposed to UTM aliquots were also collected, as negative control)
- As described above, the cell culture-derived RNA samples were used to (i) detect SARS-CoV-2 by RT-PCR amplification and (ii) identify all the microorganisms present in the sample using metagenomics sequencing

As expected, RT-PCR results showed that the NSP samples were positive for SARS-CoV-2, as well as the cell-free supernatant samples obtained from the Vero cell cultures. None of the negative controls were positive by RT-PCR. In addition, metagenomics analysis of the patient-derived NSP samples identified SARS-CoV-2 as the only sequences from eukaryotic viruses present in the samples. Similar analysis of the viral isolates (cell-free supernatant) produced an average of 1.3 million sequences corresponding to SARS-CoV-2. More importantly, whole genome sequences (close to 30,000 nucleotides) from the virus isolates matched exactly those found in the patient-derived samples (obtained without cultivation in Vero cells), indicating that the SARS-CoV-2 isolates obtained in our laboratory came directly from the patient NSP samples.

In summary, we have no doubt that the SARS-CoV-2 isolates cultured in our laboratory were obtained from patients infected with this new coronavirus in New Zealand. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need any further information.

Sincerely,



Miguel E. Quiñones-Mateu, Ph.D.
Professor, Webster Family Chair in Viral Pathogenesis
Associate Dean Research
Department of Microbiology & Immunology
University of Otago

9 November 2021

Reference: IR-01-21-30354

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I am writing in response to your request dated 9 October 2021. Your request has been considered pursuant to the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA). Specifically, you requested:

All studies and/or reports in the possession, custody or control of The New Zealand Police describing the purification of any "COVID-19 virus" (aka "SARS-COV-2", including any alleged "variants" i.e. "B.1.1.7", "B.1.351", "P.1") (for example: via filtration, ultracentrifugation and chromatography), directly from a sample taken from a diseased human where the patient sample was not first combined with any other source of genetic material (i.e. monkey kidney cells aka Vero cells; fetal bovine serum).

Police do not hold any information in relation to your request. Therefore, your request is refused pursuant to section 18(g) of the OIA as the information requested is not held.

You have a right under section 28(3) of the OIA to ask the Ombudsman to seek an investigation and review of my decision.

Yours sincerely



Superintendent Barry Taylor
Director: Major Events

19 November 2021



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

INFORMATION REQUEST – SARS-COV-2 Purification

We write in response to your email dated 9 November 2021 in which you requested the following information:

- **“All studies and/or reports in the possession, custody or control of The Tauranga City Council describing the purification of any “COVID-19 virus” (aka “SARS-COV-2”, including any alleged “variants” i.e. “B.1.1.7”, “B.1.351”, “P.1”) (for example: via filtration, ultracentrifugation and chromatography), directly from a sample taken from a diseased human where the patient sample was not first combined with any other source of genetic material (i.e. monkey kidney cells aka Vero cells; fetal bovine serum). “**

We have considered your request in accordance with the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (“**LGOIMA**”) and respond as follows:

Tauranga City Council (TCC) does not hold any reports describing the purification of the “SARS-COV-2” virus or its variants. TCC takes 24-hour composite samples of incoming wastewater and sends one litre samples from the inflow of our two wastewater treatment plants to the Institute of Environmental Science and Research (ESR) for analysis, who then test the sample and send their results to the Ministry of Health.

Therefore, your request is refused under section 17(e) of LGOIMA *that the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist or, despite reasonable efforts to locate it, cannot be found.*

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.

We may publish this response on our website as your request may be of interest to others. All personal information will be removed and only the question and answers will be seen.

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please feel free to contact the writer.

Ngā mihi

Coral Hair

Coral Hair
Manager
Democracy Services