

30th June 2021

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Official Information Act Request for – Amenable Mortality Statistics

I write in response to your Official Information Act request received by us 31st May 2021, you requested the following information:

A new report (pg.36) from the Auckland, Waitemata and Counties Manukau Health Alliance shows the numbers of premature deaths of those under 75 years of age in south Auckland remain high. And they appear to be higher, by most measures, than those from Auckland and Waitemata DHBs.

Termed amenable mortality, it is defined as premature deaths of people under age 75 years of age that could potentially be avoided, given effective and timely healthcare.

The Auckland, Waitemata and Counties Manukau Health Alliance report states that improvements have been made since 2017, but two ongoing contributors to the problem remain smoking and cardiovascular disease (CVD).

“Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is a major cause of premature death in New Zealand and contributes substantially to the escalating costs of healthcare. Modification of risk factors, through lifestyle and pharmaceutical interventions, has been shown to significantly reduce mortality and morbidity in people with diagnosed and undiagnosed CVD.”

It states that there is a need for a stronger emphasis on risk assessment for Māori and primary prevention for those at greatest risk.

“Tobacco smoking is a major public health problem in New Zealand. In addition to causing around 5,000 deaths each year, it is the leading cause of disparity, contributing to significant socioeconomic and ethnic inequalities in health.

“That rate was even higher among Māori (33%) and Pacific people (23%). Differences continue to be evident in the prevalence of smoking between the three ethnicity groupings of European/Other, Māori and Pacific.”

The stats for amenable mortality in the report are the rates per 100,000 of people in 2017, while the more recent stats are for the milestone targets.

1. **What were the total number of amenable mortality cases in Counties Manukau in 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020?**
2. **What were the total number of amenable mortality cases in Auckland in 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020?**
3. **What were the total number of amenable mortality cases in Waitemata in 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020?**
4. **What are the most common causes of death in such cases in Counties Manukau?**
5. **What is the DHB's explanation for the trend over time?**
6. **How do they differ from the other Auckland DHBs?**

Auckland and Waitemata District Health Boards transferred their requests to us to respond to.

Counties Manukau Health Response:

For context Counties Manukau Health (CM Health) employs over 8,500 staff and provides health and support services to people living in the Counties Manukau region (approx. 601,490 people). We see over 118,000 people in our Emergency Department each year, and over 2,000 visitors come through Middlemore Hospital daily.

Our services are delivered via hospital, outpatient, ambulatory and community-based models of care. We provide regional and supra-regional specialist services i.e. for orthopaedics, plastics, burns and spinal services. There are also several specialist services provided including tertiary surgical services, medical services, mental health and addiction services.

We have a metro Auckland System Level Measures plan which measures amenable mortality rates across the three DHBs and has a number of quality improvement activities aimed at reducing such deaths. Activities for example are aimed at reducing smoking rates, improving management of cardiovascular disease and increasing access to primary and secondary care. Please note data is only provisionally available up until 2018.

1. **What were the total number of amenable mortality cases in Counties Manukau in 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020?**
 2016: 590
 2017: 631
 2018: 634
 (note: the amenable mortality list was updated in July 2016 and includes atrial fibrillation & flutter, Hepatitis C and uterine cancer)
2. **What were the total number of amenable mortality cases in Auckland in 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020?**
 2016: 401
 2017: 402
 2018: 418
3. **What were the total number of amenable mortality cases in Waitemata in 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020?**
 2016: 491
 2017: 486
 2018: 508
4. **What are the most common causes of death in such cases in Counties Manukau?**

The most common causes of such deaths are coronary heart disease, diabetes, cerebrovascular disease, suicide, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and female breast cancer (stated in order from most common to less common).

5. What is the DHB's explanation for the trend over time?

The number of amenable deaths have increased on average 1% per year from 2016 to 2018 due to the causes described previously. The small increase is mainly related to the underlying growing and ageing population in the metro Auckland region.

6. How do they differ from the other Auckland DHBs?

Counties Manukau has higher number of amenable deaths compared to Auckland and Waitemata but the leading causes of death are similar across the three DHBs.

I trust this information answers your request. You are entitled to seek a review of the response by the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the Official Information Act. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or Freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response or an edited version of this may be published on the Counties Manukau Health website. If you consider there are good reasons why this response should not be made publicly available, we will be happy to consider this.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'F. Apa', written in a cursive style.

Fepulea'i Margie Apa
Chief Executive Officer
Counties Manukau Health