

2nd November 2020



Dear 

Official Information Act Request for – Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT)

I write in response to your Official Information Act request received by way of partial transfer from the Ministry of Health (MoH) on the 12th October 2020 (MoH Ref: H202007117), you requested the following information:

“In respect of electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) and the machines used to administer this treatment, can you please provide the following information:

- A. Is there a centralised purchasing agent or policy for ECT machines? eg Pharmac.
- B. Are there different machines in use in different DHBs?**
- C. How many machines are in use in each DHB? If that too wide a request, then in Waitemata DHB, Canterbury DHB, and Capital and Coast DHB.**
- D. In the light of the Somatic’s disclaimers set out below, are any Somatic machines in NZ, what advice, if any, has the Ministry given to the clinical users and/or patients using the machines.
- E. If most of the machines are of a particular manufacturer, how long have they been in use, I am particularly interested in the age and make of the ECT machines in the Waitemata DHB.**
- F. Since 1 January 2010, what advice has the Ministry given to Psychiatrists and/or Anaesthetists and or any other medical personnel and/or DHBs on the use of ECT. Within the meaning of the term “advice” that should include any policy or guidelines howsoever labelled.
- G. How many complaints, if any, have been made to the Ministry regarding the use of ECT machines annually in the period 1 January 2010, to 1 January 2020?
- H. Does the Ministry have any statistics of any complaints about ECT that have been made to DHBs, and if so, please provide similar information broken down annually in the period 1 January 2010, to 1 January 2020.**
- I. Can the Ministry provide details of whether in the last 10 years there have been any complaints of breaches of section 9 of NZBORA in relation to ECT treatments, either to the Ministry or DHBs, and if so the results of those complaints”

Please note, questions A, D, F, G & I, of your request will be responded to by the Ministry of Health.

Counties Manukau Health (CM Health) Response:

B. Are there different machines in use in different DHBs?

CM Health utilises a Thymatron IV machine to administer ECT to those identified for treatment through our Mental Health and Addictions clinicians.

C. How many machines are in use in each DHB? If that too wide a request, then in Waitemata DHB, Canterbury DHB, and Capital and Coast DHB.

CM Health currently has one of these machines on site at Middlemore Hospital.

E. If most of the machines are of a particular manufacturer, how long have they been in use, I am particularly interested in the age and make of the ECT machines in the Waitemata DHB.

CM Health's current ECT machine is eight years old. We have acquired a new Thymatron ECT system IV that is waiting to be certified by our clinical engineering team and will replace the existing machine in the coming month.

H. Does the DHB have any statistics of any complaints about ECT that have been made to DHBs, and if so, please provide similar information broken down annually in the period 1 January 2010, to 1 January 2020.

We have conducted a search of our complaints over this period of time and did not have any complaints recorded in which Electroconvulsive Therapy or ECT was referenced.

For context Counties Manukau Health (CM Health) employs over 7,500 staff and provides health and support services to people living in the Counties Manukau region (approx. 569,400 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.

I trust that this information is helpful. 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



Fepulea'i Margie Apa
Chief Executive Officer
Counties Manukau Health