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13 June 2024

s 9(2)(a)

Ref: H2024041698

Tēnā koe s 9(2)(a)

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 – Manatū Hauora (the Ministry) on 16 May 2024 for information regarding the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine (Vaxzevria). Please find a response to each part of your request below.

> *Between what dates was the product used and how many doses were administered?*
> *How much of the AstraZeneca product received was used and how much was discarded?*

These parts of your request were transferred to Health New Zealand – Te Whatu Ora on 27 May 2024 in accordance with section 14(b)(i) of the Act. You can expect a response from Health New Zealand in due course.

> *What reactions to the product are recorded?*
> *In relation to any reactions please table this according to age, gender, injury or fatality.*

There were 329 reports of suspected adverse reactions to Vaxzevria, with 1,868 reactions in those 329 reports. There were no reported cases of thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome (TTS) and no deaths reported.

You can see more detail of the reactions in Medsafe's Suspected Adverse Reaction Search tool, here: www.medsafe.govt.nz/Projects/B1/ADRDisclaimer.asp.

> *Are cases from NZ part of the litigation against AstraZeneca?*

The Ministry is not aware of New Zealand cases being part of any litigation against AstraZeneca.

> *AstraZeneca was developed as part of a collaboration between the British pharma company AstraZeneca and University of Oxford - please supply a copy of the contract the New Zealand government was required to enter into to receive this product.*

The information you have requested is withheld in full under the following sections of the Act:

- Section 9(2)(b)(ii), where its release would likely unreasonably prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied the information;
- Section 9(2)(ba)(ii), to protect information that is subject to an obligation of confidence and making it available would likely damage the public interest; and
- Section 9(2)(c), to avoid prejudice to measures to protect the health or safety of the public.

I have considered the countervailing public interest in release in making this decision and consider that it does not outweigh the need to withhold at this time.

You may be interested in a summary statement with information on the COVID-19 vaccine procurement process and the nature of the commitments made by the Government across all the contracts. The summary statement can be found here: www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/general-information-releases/summary-statement-new-zealand-covid-19-vaccine-procurement-process-and-contracts-suppliers.

> *What was the basis or recommendation for the products use in New Zealand - in other words how was it determined who might receive the product?*

Medsafe granted provisional approval of Vaxzevria in July 2021. The approved indication when the vaccine was first approved was for individuals over 18 years of age, according to official recommendations.

More detailed guidance on the vaccine's use was provided to the health sector in November 2021 when the vaccine first became available here, following the COVID-19 Vaccine Technical Advisory Group's consideration in October 2021 and Cabinet's approval on 8 November 2021. The vaccine was intended for people who were unable to take Comirnaty for medical reasons, or wanted an alternative to an mRNA vaccine such as Comirnaty.

A copy of the document titled, *"Memo – Decision to use the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine: COVID-19 Vaccine Technical Advisory Group (CV TAG) recommendations"* can be found here: www.tewhatuora.govt.nz/assets/About-us/Who-we-are/Expert-groups/COVID-19-Vaccine-Technical-Advisory-Group-CV-TAG/27-October-2021-Decision-to-use-the-AstraZeneca-COVID-19-vaccine.pdf.

> *What date was a decision made to no longer use the product and on what basis was that decision made?*

New Zealand's key decisions about the use of Vaxzevria were made after evidence about effectiveness and rare side effects emerged in other countries in early 2021. In March 2021, New Zealand decided that the principal vaccine in its COVID-19 vaccination programme would be Comirnaty, and purchased sufficient quantities of that vaccine for the whole population. Alternative vaccines such as Vaxzevria and later Nuvaxovid were added to the programme in small volumes later in the immunisation.

> *Did the Ministry receive any ongoing correspondence from AstraZeneca following its supply relating to its use or associated risks?*

Yes, the Ministry did receive ongoing correspondence from AstraZeneca, in line with the requirements in the Guidelines on the Regulation of Therapeutic Products in New Zealand.

> *In relation to the known risks associated with this product how long after the use of the product might a recipient be at risk of injury or death?*

This part of 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.

I trust this information fulfils your request. If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request with us, including this decision, please feel free to contact the OIA Services Team on: oiagr@health.govt.nz.

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 Manatū Hauora website at: www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests.

Nāku noa, nā

Dr Andrew Old
Deputy Director-General
Public Health Agency | Te Pou Hauora Tūmatanui