

10 March 2021

Anusha Bradley
RNZ



100 Heads Road, Private Bag 3003
Whanganui 4540, New Zealand

Via email: Anusha.Bradley@rnz.co.nz

Dear Anusha

Official Information Act Request – OIA 13353 Gynaecology Wait Times and Mental Health Patient Deaths

On 10 February 2021, under section 12 of the Official Information Act, you requested the following information from Whanganui District Health Board (WDHB):

” On the topic of women’s health:

1. Waiting times for urogynaecology
2. Waiting times for colorectal surgery
3. Waiting times for pelvic physiotherapy
4. Staffing levels for gynaecologists/urogynaecologists and physiotherapists
5. Staffing levels for specialist pelvic physiotherapists.

On the topic of mental health:

1. Deaths occurring in mental health in-patient unit each year, for the last five years, and the cause of death (or suspected cause)
2. Deaths of former mental health in-patients occurring within one week of discharge, and cause of death (or suspected cause). Figures for each year, for the last five years please.
3. How many of these deaths were referred to the coroner? Figures for each year, for five years please.
4. Staffing levels for psychiatrists; psychologists and nursing”

Whanganui District Health Boards response:

Women’s Health

1. Waiting times for urogynaecology

High suspicion of cancer or confirmed cancer patients are managed as per the Ministry of Health faster cancer timeframes.

Elective outpatient and theatre cases are managed according to the Ministry of Health Elective Services Performance Indicators ESPI 2 & ESPI 5; longest waiting timeframe is 120 days.

- Clinical priority score Urgent within 1 – 2 weeks
- Semi Urgent 4-8 weeks
- Routine 120 days

2. **Waiting times for colorectal surgery**

Colorectal surgery has the same waiting times as general surgery per the Ministry of Health:

- Clinical priority score Urgent within 1 – 2 weeks
- Semi Urgent 4-8 weeks
- Routine 120 days

3. **Waiting times for pelvic physiotherapy**

Pelvic physiotherapy has the same waiting times as outpatient physiotherapy per the Ministry of Health clinical priority score (longest waiting time is 120 days):

- Urgent within 1 – 2 weeks
- Semi Urgent 4-8 weeks
- Routine 120 days

4. **Staffing levels for gynaecologists/urogynaecologists and physiotherapists**

We have four general gynaecologists who all perform reconstructive operations for pelvic organ prolapse. Currently, only one performs transvaginal mesh procedures (TVT) for stress urinary incontinence. We do not have a certified urogynaecology subspecialist. Complex urogynaecology cases are usually referred to tertiary centres.

5. **Staffing levels for specialist pelvic physiotherapists.**

Currently the physiotherapy department has 1 specialist pelvic physiotherapist employed, approximately 0.3 FTE of her role is dedicated to pelvic health (both women and men). To help manage waiting lists, we also have an outsourced contract with a private specialist women's pelvic physiotherapist in Palmerston North who can provide physiotherapy consults in her Palmerston North clinic or telehealth consults as appropriate. Contingency planning for this speciality service (especially in a rural DHB) is an ongoing concern.

Mental Health

1. **Deaths occurring in mental health in-patient (MHIP) unit each year, for the last five years, and the cause of death (or suspected cause)**

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
# MHIP deaths	1	0	0	0	0
COD	Pulmonary embolus	-	-	-	-
Referred to coroner	yes	-	-	-	-

2. **Deaths of former mental health in-patients occurring within one week of discharge, and cause of death (or suspected cause). Figures for each year, for the last five years.**

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
# <= 1 week post IP discharge deaths	0	1	0	0	1
Suspected COD	-	Suspected suicide	-	-	Suspected suicide
Referred to coroner	-	yes	-	-	yes

3. **How many of these deaths were referred to the coroner? Figures for each year, for five years please.**

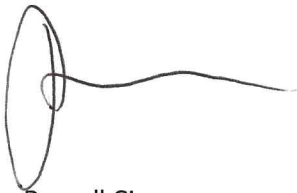
See above tables, all of the deaths reported here were referred to the coroner.

4. Staffing levels for psychiatrists; psychologists and nursing

Employed as at 12-2-21	Headcount	Contracted FTE
Psychiatrist	8	6.6
Psychologist	5	3.9
Nursing	85	71.5
Total	98	82

Should you have any further queries about the above information, please contact our OIA co-ordinator Anne Phoenix at anne.phoenix@wdhb.org.nz

Yours sincerely



Russell Simpson
Chief Executive