

16 December 2021

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**Re: Official Information Act request – endometriosis and Auckland Pain Clinic**

I refer to your Official Information Act request received dated 5 October, requesting the following information:

1. Does the Auckland Pain Clinic offer support for people with endometriosis?
2. If so, when did the clinic decide to offer pain management for people with endometriosis?
3. Why did the clinic decide to offer pain management for people with Endometriosis?
4. How many people with endometriosis have you helped with chronic pain management through the clinic, over the past 5 years? broken down by year?
5. Would you consider the demand for chronic pain relief for people suffering from Endometriosis high?
6. Is there a waitlist for people with endometriosis seeking pain relief at the clinic? How many people are on the waitlist?
7. What has the average wait time for an appointment been over the last 5 years? Broken down by year?
8. What chronic pain relief options are being offered for people with Endometriosis?

The information sought in this request is intended for use in a news article about the Endometriosis pain relief option in New Zealand.

**Response**

1. Does the Auckland Pain Clinic offer support for people with endometriosis?

The Auckland Regional Pain Service (TARPS) is a multidisciplinary service managing patients with general chronic pain. The Women's Health Pain Clinic is a specialised service for women with persistent pelvic pain. Many of these women have endometriosis, although there are other causes of persistent pelvic pain and the clinic also sees pregnant patients with difficult to manage pain. TARPS and the Women's Health Pain Clinic are separate, but collaborate closely where clinically indicated. For the purpose of clarity, all subsequent answers relate to the Women's Health Pain Clinic.

2. If so, when did the clinic decide to offer pain management for people with endometriosis?

The Women's Health Pain Clinic was set up around 1998. We decline to conduct any more research on this part of your request because we would need to examine archival material searching for a decision point when referrals for pain were first conceived of as a good clinical step. It is declined under 18 (f) of the Official Information Act because the whole of

the information you seek cannot physically be made available for review.

**3. Why did the clinic decide to offer pain management for people with Endometriosis?**

Persistent pelvic pain and endometriosis are very common problems that are leading to significant disability and suffering.

**4. How many people with endometriosis have you helped with chronic pain management through the clinic, over the past 5 years? broken down by year?**

We are unable to provide the information requested as it would require the review of individual clinical records of patients.

Due to the sensitivity of this information, frontline clinical staff would need to review individual clinical files over the course of four years and it would not be appropriate to use a contractor to review the records. This would take the frontline staff away from their clinical work and prejudice our ability to provide core clinical services.

We have considered whether charging or extending the timeframe for responding to this aspect of your request would assist us in managing this work and have concluded it would not. Part of the challenge here is that it would likely require assessment as to whether or not ethics approval would be required to go through individual patient records to elicit a specific diagnosis of endometriosis.

We have, therefore, determined to refuse this element of your request under Section 18(f) of the Official Information Act due to substantial collation and research.

**5. Would you consider the demand for chronic pain relief for people suffering from Endometriosis high?**

We are unable to answer this question as it is not specific and subjective.

**6. Is there a waitlist for people with endometriosis seeking pain relief at the clinic? How many people are on the waitlist?**

Refer to Question 4. There is a waitlist of patients to be seen in the Women's Health pain clinic. Not all of them have endometriosis however. For the reasons set out in response to question 4, we have determined to refuse this element of your request under Section 18(f) of the Official Information Act due to substantial collation and research.

**7. What has the average wait time for an appointment been over the last 5 years? Broken down by year?**

As with questions 4 and 6, this information is not easily accessible and would be a major piece of work to obtain. We aim to see all our patients within 4 months and very few fall out with this timescale with most being seen much sooner than this. For the reasons set out in response to question 4, we have determined to refuse this element of your request under Section 18(f) of the Official Information Act due to substantial collation and research.

**8. What chronic pain relief options are being offered for people with Endometriosis?**

The Women's Health Pain service uses a patient-centred, interdisciplinary team approach. Our team includes gynaecologists who specialise in endometriosis, pain medicine specialists,

pain psychologists, pelvic health physiotherapists and pain nurse specialists. Surgery, medication, and hormonal treatments are used in conjunction with interdisciplinary treatments which empower women with skills to manage their condition themselves.

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 at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely,



Ailsa Claire, OBE  
**Chief Executive**



