

Reminder of vaccine safety and effectiveness following release of misinformation

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[Chapter 4 Vaccines and
vaccinations]
[1 Dec 2023]

1 December 2023 Media statement

Statement attributable to Margie Apa, Chief Executive Te Whatu Ora

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We remind people that vaccines remain safe and effective and that they should keep up to date with their shots to protect themselves, whanau and their communities.

We are aware that a health agency staff member, with no clinical background or expert vaccine knowledge, is trying to spread misinformation.

What he is claiming is completely wrong and ill-informed and his comments demonstrate this.

Sadly, we have continued to see conspiracy theorists disseminating false and harmful misinformation.

We assure people there is no evidence whatsoever that vaccination is responsible for excess mortality in New Zealand and that they can continue to have confidence in vaccines.

Publicly available data shows that four deaths in New Zealand are possibly linked to adverse reactions following COVID-19 vaccination. This is in the context of 3,361 people whose deaths have to date been directly attributed to COVID-19 in New Zealand, with more than 12.6 million vaccines administered to eligible New Zealanders as of 2 October 2023.

By chance and separate to a prior COVID-19 vaccination event, some people will experience new illnesses or die from a pre-existing condition shortly after vaccination, especially if they are elderly.

The Centre for Adverse Reactions Monitoring (CARM) in conjunction with Medsafe and the Independent Safety Monitoring Board (ISMB) reviewed all reports of death to determine if

the person experienced any events that may have been linked to vaccination and had the potential to cause death.

In addition to this, the COVID-19 Vaccine Independent Safety Monitoring Board (CV-ISMB) has reviewed data published in safety reports of compare natural death rates to observed death rates following vaccination.

In the monitoring period for the Pfizer/ BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine (19 February 2021 to 30 September 2022), the observed number of deaths was less than the expected number of natural deaths.

It is extremely disappointing to see a staff member trying to misuse our data to spread misinformation. He is no longer at work and an employment investigation is underway.

We take the security of the information we hold extremely seriously, and this is a significant breach of trust. We are considering the privacy implications related to the staff members actions.

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