

21 January 2021

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Official Information Act Requests: Isolation of viruses on the New Zealand immunisation schedule, SARS-CoV-1 and vaccines

This letter serves as a response to your three requests for information sent to ESR under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

Your first request, received by ESR on 18 December 2020, was a follow-up to a previous request which we treated as a new request. This request was as follows:

“Clearly, I am not asking for records relating to the culturing of something which is all that you have provided.

According to my OIA request, I am specifically asking for the isolation of the viruses on the immunisation schedule. Isolation again means the separation of a thing from everything else. The common isolation methods for particles from 30nm and up are:

- *ultra centrifugation*
- *ultra filtration*
- *precipitation*
- *immunoaffinity*

Culturing is not an isolation method, it's a "growing" method.

Please revise your response to me based on the criteria which I described in my original OIA request: that of which is the isolation of the virus NOT the culturing of something.”

Your second request, received by ESR on 11 January 2021, was as follows:

“All records in the possession, custody or control of ESR describing the isolation of a SARS-COV-1 virus as well as any of the other common cold associated coronavirus, directly from a sample taken from a diseased patient, where the patient sample was not first combined with any other source of genetic material (i.e. monkey kidney cells aka vero cells; lung cells from a lung cancer patient).

Please note that I am using "isolation" in the every-day sense of the word: the act of separating a thing(s) from everything else. I am not requesting records where "isolation of SARS-COV-1 or any of the other common cold associated coronavirus" refers instead to:

- *the culturing of something, or*
- *the performance of an amplification test (i.e. a PCR test), or*
- *the sequencing of something.*

Please also note that my request is not limited to records that were authored by ESR or that pertain to work done by ESR. My request includes any sort of record, for example (but not limited to) any published peer-reviewed study that ESR has downloaded or printed.

If any records match the above description of requested records and are currently available to the public elsewhere, please provide enough information about each record so that I may identify and access each record with certainty (i.e. title, author(s), date, journal, where the public may access it)."

Your third request, received by ESR on 11 January 2021, was as follows:

"All records in the possession, custody or control of ESR describing the inoculation of the isolated/purified vaccine on human host cells, the inoculated host cells then exposed to isolated/purified SARS-COV-2 virus, and then proof that the immunised cells resisted disease from the isolated/purified SARS-COV-2 virus.

Please note that I am using "isolation" in the every-day sense of the word: the act of separating a thing(s) from everything else. So the experiment must only apply isolated and purified vaccines and isolated and purified viruses to the human host cells. The experiment must not mix anything that would contaminate the results like Antibiotics, Antifungals, and Fetal Bovine Serum.

Please also note that my request is not limited to records that were authored by ESR or that pertain to work done by ESR. My request includes any sort of record, for example (but not limited to) any published peer-reviewed study that ESR has downloaded or printed.

If any records match the above description of requested records and are currently available to the public elsewhere, please provide enough information about each record so that I may identify and access each record with certainty (i.e. title, author(s), date, journal, where the public may access it)."

Our response to your requests:

In common microbiological usage 'isolate' is understood to mean a pure growth of a bacteria or virus in an appropriate growth medium e.g.

- a pure bacterial growth on agar or in a broth
- a pure viral growth cultured in a broth of living cells (viruses generally only grow within living cells like the Vero cells mentioned above).

The terms 'isolation' and 'culturing' are often used interchangeably. Using the definition of 'isolation' that you refer to in your requests, ESR does not hold any records describing 'isolation' of viruses on the New Zealand vaccination schedule, SARS-CoV-1 or vaccines.

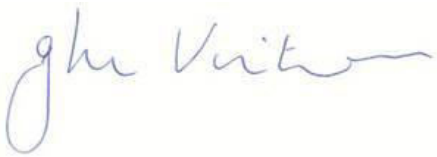
We cannot provide papers that staff in ESR have downloaded or printed which may apply to your requests using your definition of 'isolation' as the information cannot be made available without substantial collation or research pursuant to section 18(f) of the Act. We have considered section 18A of the Act and consider that even if we were to charge you for the time to check and collate any relevant materials and extend the timeframe of the request, this would still unduly affect our team who are supporting New Zealand's COVID-19 response work.

Your right to seek a review

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Thank you for your request.

Yours sincerely



Jill Vintiner
**Joint General Manager Health and Environment Group - Health
ESR**