

20 May 2021

Denise Astill

By email: [denise@facsnz.com](mailto:denise@facsnz.com)  
Ref: H202105751

Dear Denise Astill

### Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) on 11 May 2021 for:

*“How many live births were exposed to carbamazepine, phenobarbital, phenytoin, topiramate, clobazam, and lamotrigine during 2016-2020? Can this data please be broken down for each of these medicines to Māori and non-Māori.”*

The Ministry of Health (the Ministry) is unable to obtain live birth data for 2020 as there is a six-month lag time before maternity data become provisionally available. Therefore, this part of your request is refused under section 18(g)(i) of the Act, as it is not held by the Ministry or another agency subject to the Act. Please note, the 2020 provisional data will become available from July 2021 onwards. The information you have requested for the period 2016-2019 is shown in table 1 below. This data was extracted on 17 May 2021. Please note that exposure during pregnancy is inferred, based on the estimated date of conception.

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](mailto: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 Ministry website at: [www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests](http://www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests).

Yours sincerely



Gaynor Bradfield  
**Manager Office of the Deputy Director-General  
Data and Digital**

<b>Table 1. Number of liveborn infants whose mothers were dispensed selected anti-epilepsy drugs during pregnancy</b>				
<b>Year of birth</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>Māori</b>				
Carbamazepine	19	22	16	17
Clobazam	<5	0	<5	<5
Lamotrigine	25	31	32	31
Phenytoin sodium	<5	<5	<5	0
Topiramate	9	9	7	5
<b>Non-Māori</b>				
Carbamazepine	38	22	30	30
Clobazam	6	<5	10	7
Lamotrigine	76	73	85	92
Phenobarbitone	<5	0	0	<5
Phenytoin sodium	<5	0	0	0
Topiramate	18	30	26	19

Please note the following caveats with the figures presented above:

- The selected pharmaceuticals are found in the Therapeutic Group 'Anti-epilepsy Drugs'
- Counts are of liveborn babies whose mothers were dispensed any of the selected pharmaceuticals during her/their pregnancy. \*
- \*The pregnancy time period starts at 30 days prior to date of conception (based on gestational age at birth) and finishes on the baby's date of birth.
- Ethnicity is prioritised and is taken from ethnicity recorded at birth.
- Babies may appear in multiple categories if their mother was dispensed more than one of the selected pharmaceuticals. Because of this, individual cells should not be summed: this will result in double-counting, as people can appear in more than one cell and will be counted in each row they appear.