

Proactive release of Covid-19 vaccine related treatment injury claims – January 2025

Please find background information about treatment injury data at the end of this document.

COVID-19 vaccine related treatment injury claims

The data below was extracted on 8 January 2025 for treatment injury claims lodged with ACC between 18 February 2021 (when New Zealand began COVID-19 vaccinations) and 7 January 2025, where the treatment event was *vaccination or injection/medications, adverse reaction/medication error* and where the medication type was recorded as *vaccine*.

However, as these fields are only completed when cover for the claim is decided, the figures provided have been supplemented by a text search of the claim forms received by ACC which mention *Comirnaty* (the name of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine), *AstraZeneca*, *Vaxzevria* (alternative name of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine), *Novavax*, *Nuvaxovid* (the name of the Novavax COVID-19 vaccine), or included the terms *covid* or *Pfizer* together with *vacc*, *injection*, *booster*, *jab*, or *shot*. This text search allows us to identify claims that have been lodged but where cover has not been decided. Free text search methods are not reliable data extraction methods and can result in anomalies in the data; so claims identified by this method above have been manually reviewed and some false positive matches removed. As the data below was extracted from a live system, figures may differ if rerun in the future.

Data

Between 18 February 2021 and 7 January 2025, ACC has received 4,318 claims for injuries relating to the Covid vaccination. 1,740 claims have been accepted, 2,540 have been declined and 38 are yet to be decided. The following tables break down these numbers by the sex, age and ethnicity of the claimants.

Comirnaty was originally the only Covid vaccine that was used as part of New Zealand's vaccination response but more recently the AstraZeneca and Novavax Covid-19 vaccines have also been used. The specific vaccine used is not always identified on the claim so identifying the vaccine used cannot be reliably determined. Given the vaccination policy, the vast majority of the claims reported below relate to the Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty vaccine.

Privacy

ACC does not routinely disclose low value numbers related to claims. Accordingly, some of the values in the tables only indicate that the number is less than 4 (denoted as <4). In other instances, values are suppressed and notated as (--) to limit the potential for particular individuals or matters specific to certain individuals from being identified.

Withholding in this way is necessary to protect the privacy of these individuals under section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act 1982. In doing so, we have considered the public interest in making the information available and have determined that it does not outweigh the need to protect the privacy of these persons. If you are not happy with this response, you have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman. Information about how to do this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by phoning 0800 802 602.

Dose

ACC has asked lodging providers to indicate whether the vaccination leading to the claim was a first, second or third primary/booster dose. Whilst 53% have provided this information which has been provided as free text, the remaining claims do not clarify which dose was involved. The table below categorises the claims received based on whether the claim was for the first, second or third primary/booster dose or whether this wasn't clear from the description given.

| Dose | Accepted | Declined | Pending Decision | Total |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| First | 208 | 412 | <4 | -- |
| Second | 384 | 525 | 6 | 915 |
| Third Primary/Booster ¹ | 291 | 445 | -- | -- |
| Unspecified | 857 | 1,158 | 26 | 2,041 |

| | | | | |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| Total | 1,740 | 2,540 | 38 | 4,318 |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|

¹ACC does not routinely collect the number of booster dose, we are unable to specify if that is the first booster or a subsequent booster dose.

Accepted Injuries

Treatment injuries are confirmed and recorded when a claim is decided. The following table shows the primary injury recorded for the accepted Covid vaccination claims decided by 7 January 2025.

| Primary Injury | Accepted Claims |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| Allergic Reaction | 231 |
| Sprain | 213 |
| Cardiac injury | 183 |
| Contusion | 171 |
| Adverse Drug Reaction | 128 |
| Anaphylactic Reaction | 95 |
| Infection | 72 |
| Shoulder Damage/Injury | 64 |
| Cellulitis | 56 |
| Bursitis | 44 |
| Inflammation | 42 |
| Nerve Damage | 32 |
| Other | 409 |
| Total | 1,740 |

Declined Reason

The table below shows the number of declined claims, broken down by declined reasons, which relate to the treatment injury assessment criteria.

| Declined Reason | Number of Declined Claims |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| No Injury | 1,808 |
| No Causal Link | 404 |
| Withdrawn | 128 |
| Lack of Information | 73 |
| Underlying Health Condition | 21 |
| Ordinary Consequence of Treatment | 19 |
| Other | 87 |
| Total | 2,540 |

Severity of Injuries

Measuring the impact of an injury on a person is challenging. ACC and others use the overall cost of a treatment injury claim as an indicator of the severity of the injury because more costly claims are likely to indicate claims where there has been a more severe impact on the person injured. While not always directly related, overall cost is one measure of severity and impact.

The following table shows the number of accepted claims grouped by the total payments made per claim to 8 January 2025.

| Payments to 8 January 2025 | Number of Accepted Claims |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| No payment to date | 257 |
| Up to \$100 | 406 |
| Over \$100 to \$500 | 534 |

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| Over \$500 to \$1,000 | 150 |
| Over \$1,000 to \$5,000 | 189 |
| Over \$5,000 to \$10,000 | 59 |
| Over \$10,000 | 145 |
| Total | 1,740 |

543 out of 1,740 accepted claims had resulted in payments of over \$500 by 8 January 2025. 257 accepted claims had yet to receive a payment by 8 January 2025.

Total payments made by ACC by 8 January 2025 on these 1,740 accepted claims was \$12,668,187.

To date, 5 claims have been accepted by ACC which have related to a fatal injury.

Sex

| Sex | Accepted | Declined | Pending Decision | Total |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| Female | 1,176 | 1,607 | 22 | 2,805 |
| Male | 564 | 933 | 16 | 1,513 |
| Total | 1,740 | 2,540 | 38 | 4,318 |

The table above shows that females are more likely than males to have lodged a claim for a Covid vaccination treatment injury. Claims for female clients represent 65% of claims lodged.

Age Band

| Age Band | Accepted | Declined | Pending Decision | Total |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| 5-11 | 11 | 13 | 0 | 24 |
| 12-17 | 47 | 48 | <4 | -- |
| 18-24 | 111 | 166 | <4 | -- |
| 25-29 | 109 | 173 | 0 | 282 |
| 30-34 | 137 | 221 | <4 | -- |
| 35-39 | 147 | 210 | <4 | -- |
| 40-44 | 152 | 265 | 6 | 423 |
| 45-49 | 193 | 285 | 6 | 484 |
| 50-54 | 166 | 303 | <4 | -- |
| 55-59 | 186 | 240 | 5 | 431 |
| 60-64 | 129 | 194 | 6 | 329 |
| 65-69 | 148 | 151 | <4 | -- |
| 70-74 | 84 | 126 | <4 | -- |
| 75-79 | 55 | 75 | <4 | -- |
| 80 plus and Unknown | 65 | 70 | <4 | -- |
| Total | 1,740 | 2,540 | 38 | 4,318 |

Ethnicity

The ethnicity data provided below is based on ACC's 'prioritised ethnicity' data field. This method reduces the six ethnic responses to a single response by a system of "prioritisation" where: Māori regardless of other ethnicities listed is classified as Māori; Pacific peoples with any other response other than Māori is classified as Pacific; Asian peoples with any other response other than Māori and Pacific are classified as Asian; Other ethnicity regardless of any other response other than Māori, Asian or Pacific is classified as Other. Those that listed European and did not list Māori, Pacific, Asian or Other are classified as European.

ACC reports ethnicity using a different method to Statistics New Zealand. Care must be taken when comparing ACC's ethnicity data with other Government agencies or census data.

| Ethnicity | Accepted | Declined | Pending Decision | Total |
|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| Māori | 145 | 220 | <4 | -- |
| Pacific Peoples | 62 | 97 | <4 | -- |
| Asian | 149 | 212 | 4 | 365 |
| European | 1,244 | 1,801 | 27 | 3,072 |
| Other | 140 | 210 | <4 | -- |
| Total | 1,740 | 2,540 | 38 | 4,318 |

71% of claims lodged with ACC for Covid vaccination injuries have been for clients with European ethnicity with 71% accepted for cover. Māori comprise 9% of claims lodged with ACC for Covid vaccination injuries and 8% of the claims accepted.

Claims by Month

The following table shows the number of Covid vaccination injury claims received by ACC by month. This is grouped by the recorded accident date ('Number of Claimed Vaccinations' column in table below) and by the date on which the claim was lodged with ACC ('Number Lodged' column in table below). ACC records treatment injury accident dates as the date on which the client first sought treatment for the injury. This may not necessarily be the date on which the event leading to the injury occurred although for the purpose of the analysis this date is used as a proxy for the date of vaccination.

| Month | Number of Claimed Vaccinations | Number Lodged |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------|
| February - March 2021 | 16 | 5 |
| April 2021 | 66 | 20 |
| May 2021 | 120 | 62 |
| June 2021 | 111 | 74 |
| July 2021 | 151 | 52 |
| August 2021 | 376 | 131 |
| September 2021 | 531 | 275 |
| October 2021 | 610 | 331 |
| November 2021 | 446 | 433 |
| December 2021 | 402 | 396 |
| January 2022 | 366 | 315 |
| February 2022 | 388 | 388 |
| March 2022 | 121 | 287 |
| April 2022 | 46 | 171 |
| May 2022 | 34 | 162 |
| June 2022 | 24 | 116 |
| July 2022 | 61 | 99 |
| August 2022 | 57 | 110 |
| September 2022 | 27 | 92 |
| October 2022 | 23 | 67 |
| November 2022 | 14 | 64 |
| December 2022 | 14 | 50 |
| January 2023 | 12 | 33 |
| February 2023 | 9 | 38 |
| March 2023 | 6 | 28 |
| April 2023 | 59 | 38 |
| May 2023 | 38 | 54 |
| June 2023 | 16 | 47 |
| July 2023 | 11 | 25 |

| | | |
|----------------|----|----|
| August 2023 | 10 | 31 |
| September 2023 | 12 | 26 |
| October 2023 | 8 | 24 |
| November 2023 | 13 | 22 |
| December 2023 | 22 | 24 |
| January 2024 | 4 | 16 |
| February 2024 | 4 | 23 |
| March 2024 | 12 | 15 |
| April 2024 | 19 | 26 |
| May 2024 | 14 | 30 |
| June 2024 | 15 | 18 |
| July 2024 | <4 | 17 |
| August 2024 | <4 | 15 |
| September 2024 | 8 | 18 |
| October 2024 | 4 | 15 |
| November 2024 | <4 | 13 |
| December 2024 | 5 | 22 |
| Unknown | 5 | 0 |

²Few vaccinations and consequently vaccination claims were lodged in the month of February 2021, so February and March 2021 have been grouped together to avoid reporting small numbers.

Te Whatu Ora Region

The Te Whatu Ora region has been provided below based on the Region of Treatment where this has been identified and by the Region of Residence of the client.

Given that the number of claims received from some regions is quite small only the total number of claims lodged has been shown in the table below.

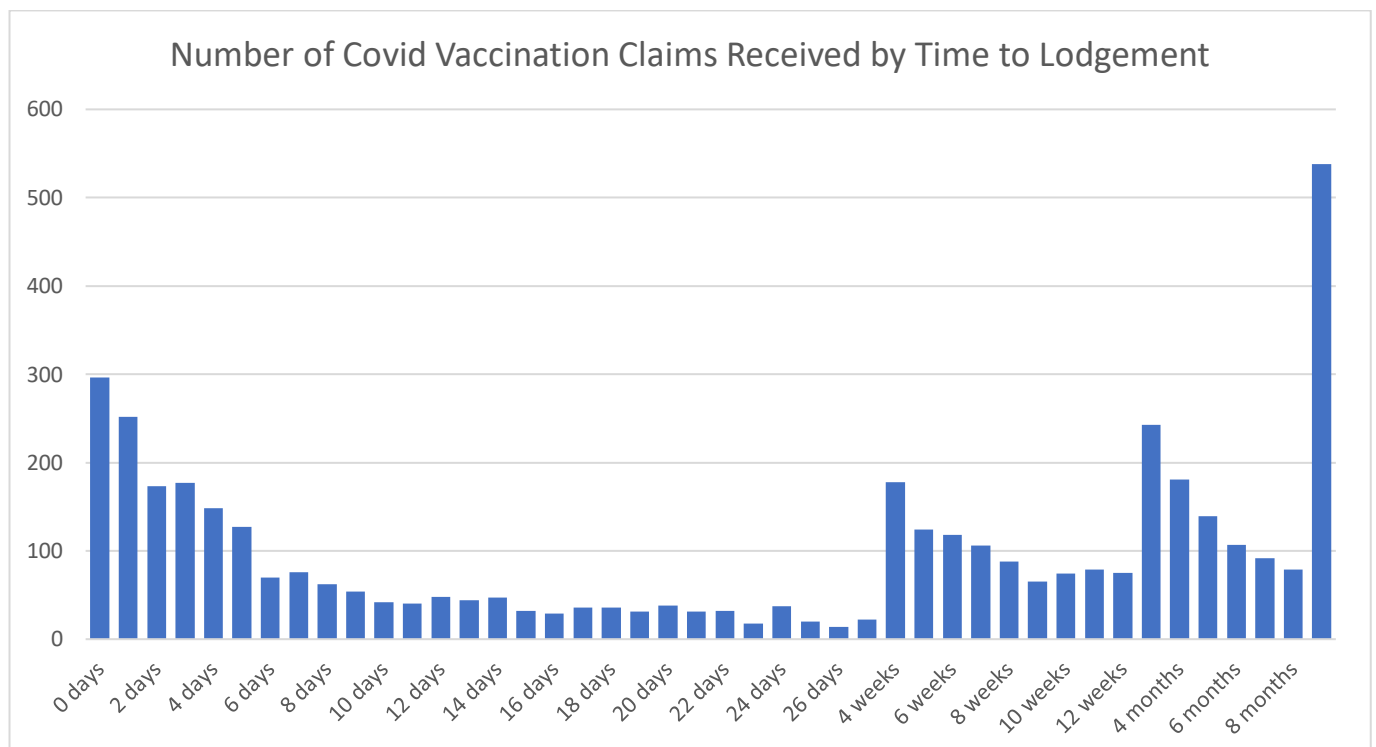
| Te Whatu Ora Region | Region of Treatment | Region of Residence |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Auckland | 416 | 320 |
| Bay of Plenty | 138 | 225 |
| Canterbury | 246 | 485 |
| Capital & Coast | 167 | 259 |
| Counties Manukau | 64 | 334 |
| Hawkes Bay | 71 | 124 |
| Hutt Valley | 55 | 135 |
| Lakes | 37 | 80 |
| Mid Central | 93 | 162 |
| Nelson Marlborough | 99 | 173 |
| Northland | 94 | 142 |
| South Canterbury | 55 | 43 |
| Southern | 266 | 481 |
| Tairāwhiti | 17 | 35 |
| Taranaki | 104 | 167 |
| Waikato | 264 | 482 |
| Wairarapa | -- | 35 |
| Waitemata | 127 | 484 |
| West Coast | 23 | 37 |
| Whanganui | 65 | 110 |
| Overseas | <4 | 0 |
| Unknown | 1,893 | 5 |
| Total | 4,318 | 4,318 |

Time to Lodgement

Some vaccination injuries are immediately apparent whereas other injuries may take some time to become apparent. The table below shows the time between the accident date (assumed to be the date of vaccination in most cases) and the date when the claim is lodged with ACC.

| Delay | Number of Claims | Delay | Number of Claims |
|---------|------------------|------------|------------------|
| 0 days | 296 | 22 days | 32 |
| 1 days | 252 | 23 days | 18 |
| 2 days | 173 | 24 days | 37 |
| 3 days | 177 | 25 days | 20 |
| 4 days | 148 | 26 days | 14 |
| 5 days | 127 | 27 days | 22 |
| 6 days | 70 | 4 weeks | 178 |
| 7 days | 76 | 5 weeks | 124 |
| 8 days | 62 | 6 weeks | 118 |
| 9 days | 54 | 7 weeks | 106 |
| 10 days | 42 | 8 weeks | 88 |
| 11 days | 40 | 9 weeks | 65 |
| 12 days | 48 | 10 weeks | 74 |
| 13 days | 44 | 11 weeks | 79 |
| 14 days | 47 | 12 weeks | 75 |
| 15 days | 32 | 3 months | 243 |
| 16 days | 29 | 4 months | 181 |
| 17 days | 36 | 5 months | 139 |
| 18 days | 36 | 6 months | 107 |
| 19 days | 31 | 7 months | 92 |
| 20 days | 38 | 8 months | 79 |
| 21 days | 31 | 9 months + | 538 |

The table above is illustrated in the chart below.



Background information about treatment injury data

ACC has provided cover for treatment injuries since 1 July 2005. The treatment injury provisions replaced the medical misadventure provisions of the Accident Compensation Act 2001, to bring it more in line with the no-fault nature of the scheme.

A treatment injury is a personal injury caused as a result of seeking or receiving medical treatment from, or at the direction of, a registered health professional. In order to fulfil the criteria for cover, the person must have suffered a personal injury and there must be a clear causal link between the treatment and the injury, and the injury must not be a necessary part or ordinary consequence of the treatment.

When considering treatment injury data, it is important to note that the number of claims lodged with ACC cannot be taken as an accurate indication of the occurrence of injury during treatment or the quality of care. This is because, among other reasons, not all occurrences of injury during treatment are lodged with ACC.

The ACC website contains further information on treatment injury <https://www.acc.co.nz/for-providers/treatment-safety/>.

A full overview of treatment injury in public and private surgical hospitals and general practice settings is available at <https://www.acc.co.nz/assets/provider/ACC7971-Supporting-Treatment-Safety-2021.pdf>.

Claim lodgement rates are dependent on several factors. They can be influenced by:

- population demography i.e. the characteristics of the resident population, visitors and referred patients
- health status of the population treated
- what level of facility the organisation provides i.e. tertiary versus secondary
- familiarity of health providers or clients in recognising and/or lodging treatment injury claims.