



West Coast District Health Board

Te Poari Hauora a Rohe o Tai Poutini

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4 November 2019

9(2)(a)

RE Official Information Act request WCDHB 9357

I refer to your email dated 10 October 2019 requesting the following information under the Official Information Act from West Coast DHB, in relation to Prostate Cancer Treatment; specifically:

1. *The current waiting time for an appointment following a referral from a GP for a prostate cancer initial consultation*

Men are referred from the GP with an elevated PSA¹ level or an abnormal DRE² for investigation of prostate cancer. The current waiting time for a First Specialist Appointment in this setting depends on the degree of PSA elevation and/or abnormality on DRE and is on average between 4 and 8 weeks.

1 – Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) is a protein produced by prostate cells. The PSA blood test is not a prostate cancer specific test but gives an indication of the risk of prostate cancer.

2 – Digital Rectal Examination (DRE) allows the examiner to feel the prostate to assess size and consistency.

2. *The current waiting time for a follow-up appointment for a prostate biopsy*

The majority of prostate biopsies are undertaken at the first specialist appointment after discussion with the urologist. In this situation the wait time would be 0 days. Occasionally, further investigation is needed prior to biopsy - this is usually via an MRI of the prostate, which is done in Christchurch. In this situation, the wait time for biopsy would be 4 weeks when visiting urologist is back on the West Coast on scheduled monthly roster.

Patients with confirmed prostate cancer are followed up locally by the resident Urology Nurse Specialists on the West Coast, so that there is active ongoing contact with patients undertaken between them being reviewed by a Consultant Urologist.

3. *The current waiting time for a post-biopsy appointment to discuss results and treatment options*

A Urologist visits the West Coast once a month. Following a prostate biopsy, results generally take 10-14 working days to be finalised and reported. Men are notified of results by a Clinical Nurse Specialist.

They are then followed up in the next specialist clinic to discuss treatment/management options. This equates on average to a 2 week wait between notification of results and seeing the urologist.

- 4. *The current waiting time for a radical prostatectomy following the post-biopsy appointment for persons with a confirmed prostate cancer diagnosis. (Please only include those patients who undergo prostatectomy surgery who have a confirmed prostate cancer diagnosis, not those who require the surgery for other conditions.)***

Once radical prostatectomy has been chosen as the treatment of choice, the current average wait time for surgery is 4 to 8 weeks.

The decision to treat is made at the first follow up appointment, but not the mode of treatment. There is generally a further appointment made with a radiation oncologist to discuss radiation therapy. Once the man has all of the information on each treatment option, they then choose the mode that suits their individual needs.

I trust that this satisfies your interest in this matter.

Please note that this response, or an edited version of this response, may be published on the West Coast DHB website after your receipt of this response.

Yours sincerely



Melissa Macfarlane
Acting Executive Director
Planning, Funding & Decision Support