

FOI 2853

3rd February 2025

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST

Request:

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 could I please have details of the number of women who have had disclosure meetings regarding misread smear tests within the Southern Health and Social Care area in the years 2018 to 2024 (both of these years to be included).

Response:

Each individual case of invasive cervical cancer diagnosed in NI is assessed through an audit process, known as the Audit of Invasive Cervical Cancers (AoICC). The audit framework guidance states that audit outcome smear review discordance (misread smears) should be categorised into **Category 2 satisfactory with learning points** (within the limitations of a screening programme) and **unsatisfactory (Category 3)**.

Following completion of the AoICC process and categorisation of individual audit findings there should be an offer of disclosure of the findings relating to her audit to each woman. During the period 2018 to 2024, there were 9 disclosure meetings for women in the Southern Health and Social Care Trust with an unsatisfactory finding (Category 3).

A similar number of women with a Category 2 finding were also offered a disclosure meeting during the period 2018 to 2024. Note, the Category 2 classification are cases that evidence indicates are at the limit of detection by cytology screening staff. This classification means abnormalities are present, but only seen on review and with hindsight and full knowledge that this is a cancer case. This will include cases known to be difficult to perceive or identify, or cases that are not clearly abnormal.

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