



Ministry
of Defence

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16 June 2015

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your letter of 19 May 2015 to [REDACTED] CO Catterick Garrison. This has been passed to the office of the Surgeon General to reply.

You requested the following information:

1. *Where any of your troops given Lariam, if so how many?*
2. *Are your troops being monitored for any effects by the MO?*
3. *Were all the troops before deployment questioned/assessed about their medical history before they were given chemoprophylaxis such as Lariam?*
4. *Would you be willing to have your troops on their return monitored?"*

Your enquiry has been treated as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000 and I can confirm that the MOD holds information within the scope of your enquiry.

Some of the information held falls entirely within the scope of the absolute exemptions provided for at section 40 (Personal Data). Section 40(2) has been applied to some of the information in order to protect personal information as governed by the Data Protection Act 1998. This is also in line with Defence Statistics rounding policy, in which numbers fewer than five are suppressed in order to protect patient confidentiality. Section 40 is an absolute exemption and there is therefore no requirement to consider the public interest in making a decision to withhold the information.

1. Defence Statistics (Health) can confirm that, as at 10 June 2015, less than 5 Service personnel from Catterick Garrison had been prescribed mefloquine hydrochloride (commercial name Lariam) prior to deployment to Sierra Leone on Op GRITROCK.
2. The exact choice of anti-malarial drug offered to personnel is based on an assessment of the patient that includes the region to which the individual is to deploy, their health and any past side effects. This is to avoid, for example, the prescription of mefloquine to Service personnel with a history of psychological illness.

3. There is no specific monitoring planned for Service personnel returning from Sierra Leone who may have been prescribed mefloquine: individuals are, however, advised to seek early medical assistance if they experience untoward side effects when taking the drug.

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact the Headquarters of the Surgeon General in the first instance. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Deputy Chief Information Officer, 2nd Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the FOIA. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.org.uk>.

Yours sincerely,

Headquarters of the Surgeon General