



Ministry
of Defence

Ministry of Defence
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Ref: FOI2018/07218

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[REDACTED]

22 June 2018

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your email of 30/05/2018 requesting the following information:

"Would it be possible to provide me with statistics regarding the number of personnel who have fallen ill with ulcerative colitis while carrying out a tour of duty in the Falklands or after their return?

Is this a known problem arising from the living conditions?"

Following a clarification on 1 June 2018, Defence Statistics has agreed to provide the number of people with a read code for ulcerative colitis entered within their medical record from 2010 onwards who have previously been on an assignment/deployment to the Falklands.

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that information in scope of your request is held.

Between 1 January 2010 and 21 June 2018 there were 19 UK Armed Forces personnel with a read code for ulcerative colitis within their medical record during or following on from an assignment/deployment to the Falklands.

It is possible that there maybe a small additional number who could have been diagnosed with ulcerative colitis within secondary care (hospital). This information would only be available within free texted information; therefore this number should be treated as a minimum.

Officials in the Headquarters of the Surgeon General (HQSG), responsible for overseas healthcare provision, are unaware of issues with the living conditions in the Falklands that would cause ulcerative colitis. The advice of medical personnel in HQ British Forces South Atlantic Islands has also been sought. Unfortunately, due to key subject matter experts recently leaving post, it has not been possible to obtain this information within the time permitted under the FOIA to respond to your request. Notwithstanding, HQSG will obtain this advice at the very earliest opportunity and once received will write to you. If you would like to discuss this aspect of your request further, please contact HQSG at: SGSecFin-SecGpMailbox@mod.gov.uk.

Would you like to be added to our contact list, so that we can inform you about updates to our statistical publications covering Deaths and Health and Safety in the UK Armed Forces and consult you if we are thinking of making changes? You can subscribe to updates by emailing: DefStrat-Stat-Health-PQ-FOI@mod.gov.uk

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 me 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 Information Rights Compliance team, 1st Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.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 Freedom of Information Act. 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.gov.uk>.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely

Defence Statistics Health Head (B1)