



Ministry of Defence

Ref: FOI 2022/03510

Ministry of Defence
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Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email dated 15 March 2022 requesting the following information:

“Could the following additional information in total be requested :

- “1. Please could you tell me the number of military personnel (broken down into Army, Navy and Air Force) who sustained the following injuries between 2011 and 2021:
 - *Ankle fracture with or without syndesmosis injury*
 - *Severe ankle sprain*
 - *Acromioclavicular joint dislocation or fracture*
 - *Rupture of long head of biceps*
 - *Rupture of Achilles tendon*
2. How did these injuries occur (eg, active service, training, sport)?
3. Of these injuries, how many required surgical intervention of one or more admissions?
4. Where was surgery carried out? (in the field or returned to UK NHS hospital)
5. How long were these admissions?
6. What were the readmission rates? And what were the most common reasons for readmission e.g. infection, implant failure, etc?
7. How long did rehabilitation take?
8. How long did it take from point of injury to return to active duty?
9. What proportion of patients were medically retired?”

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. However, I must advise you that we will not be able to answer your request without exceeding the appropriate cost limit. This is because to identify how many personnel sustained an ankle fracture with or without syndesmosis injury between 2011 and 2021 alone would require a manual search of medical records that would exceed one year of effort. Further cost would be associated with the remainder of the request.

Section 12 of the Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit, which for central government is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3.5 working days in determining whether the department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting it.

The MOD may be able to provide some information in scope of your request if you reduce or refine your request to bring the cost of compliance under the limit.

Under Section 16 (Advice and Assistance) you may find it helpful to note MOD may consider providing the following information from electronic centrally compiled data to bring the cost of compliance under the limit:

The number of UK armed forces personnel with a Read code for the following injuries entered into their electronic medical record between January 2017 and December 2021:

- ankle fracture,
- acromioclavicular joint dislocation or fracture,
- rupture of long head of biceps and rupture of Achilles tendon

Please note, as secondary healthcare is delivered by the NHS or private practice, the hospital may then advise a military GP if a patient has the procedure in the form of a letter. This information may be entered by the military GP into the military medical record as scanned documents or free text or as coded information. Therefore, information relating to healthcare accessed in secondary care would require a manual review of medical records to determine the number receiving surgical intervention.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

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

If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely

Defence Statistics Health