



Ministry of Defence

Ministry of Defence
Abbeywood North
Bristol
BS34 8JH
United Kingdom

Telephone: 03067 984423

E-mail: Analysis-Health-PQ-FOI@mod.gov.uk

Ref: FOI2021/07413

13 July 2023

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your email from 14 June 2023 requesting the following information:

“I have been reading through the Annual Medical Discharges in the UK Regular Armed Forces report and wanted to ask if you have additional information available.

The ICD-10 classifies the reasons why personnel were medically discharged and how much they represent of the total number.

I wanted to know if you have a report available for males and a report for females rather than them being reported together.”

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that all the information in scope of your request is held. Some of the information falls entirely within the scope of the absolute exemptions provided for at section 40 (Personal Data) of the FOIA and has been withheld.

Section 40(2) has been applied to some of the information to protect personal information as governed by the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR. In line with JSP200 Statistics Disclosure Guidance, numbers fewer than five are suppressed to reduce the possible inadvertent disclosure of individual identities. 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.

Tables 1 – 3 present the number of UK armed forces personnel medically discharged for 2022/23 and the total for the latest five-year period by principal ICD-10 cause code group, gender and service.

Each of the three services are presented separately as comparisons between the services are considered invalid. This is because each service has its own employment and retention standards. Therefore, a particular medical condition may lead to an individual not being retained in service if it affects their ability to meet their employment standards at sea but an individual on land may be retained in a permanently downgraded post with the same medical condition.

It is also important to note that as each medical discharge can only have one principal condition; a decrease in one cause code group may appear as an increase in another.

Table 1: UK Regular Royal Navy/Royal Marines medical discharges by principal ICD-10 cause code group¹, financial year and gender², numbers and percentages³

1 April 2018 to 31 March 2023

	5 Year Total				2022/23			
	Males		Females		Males		Females	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
All medical discharges	1,701	n/a	269	n/a	346	n/a	50	n/a
All cause coded medical discharges	1,699	100	269	100	346	100	50	100
Infectious and parasitic diseases	~	<1	0	0	~	<1	0	0
Neoplasms	20	1	6	2	~	1	~	<10
Blood disorders	~	<1	~	<1	~	<1	0	0
Endocrine, nutritional and metabolic diseases	~	2	~	1	8	2	0	0
- Of which diabetes	~	2	~	<1	5	1	0	0
- Of which insulin-dependent	16	<1	0	0	~	1	0	0
- Of which non-insulin-dependent	~	<1	~	<1	0	0	0	0
Mental and behavioural disorders	389	23	99	37	98	28	18	36
- Of which mood disorders	124	7	26	10	~	10	~	<10
- Of which depression	108	6	24	9	~	9	~	<10
- Of which neurotic, stress related and somatoform	228	13	65	24	53	15	16	32
- Of which post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)	104	6	38	14	14	4	8	16
- Of which adjustment disorder	24	1	7	3	~	2	~	<10
Nervous system disorders	72	4	10	4	~	4	~	<10
- Of which epilepsy	~	<1	~	<1	1	<1	0	0
Eye and adnexa diseases	~	<1	~	<1	~	<1	~	<10
- Of which blindness, low vision and visual disturbance	~	<1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ear and mastoid process diseases	~	4	~	<1	9	3	0	0
- Of which hearing loss	50	3	0	0	7	2	0	0
- Of which noise-induced hearing loss	10	<1	0	0	0	0	0	0
- Of which tinnitus	6	<1	0	0	~	<1	0	0
Circulatory system disorders	49	3	5	2	10	3	0	0
Respiratory system disorders	28	2	0	0	6	2	0	0
- Of which asthma	21	1	0	0	5	1	0	0
Digestive system disorders	50	3	7	3	~	3	~	<10
Skin and subcutaneous tissue diseases	~	2	~	1	6	2	0	0
Musculoskeletal disorders and injuries	849	50	115	43	159	46	23	46
- Of which injuries and disorders of the knee ³	207	12	21	8	39	11	6	12
- Of which knee pain	103	6	5	2	~	7	~	<10
- Of which back pain	155	9	23	9	~	9	~	<10
- Of which low back pain	139	8	22	8	~	7	~	<10
- Of which injuries and disorders of the ankle and foot ⁴	95	6	15	6	~	7	~	<10
- Of which heat injury	5	<1	0	0	0	0	0	0
- Of which cold injury	~	<1	~	<1	~	<1	0	0
Genitourinary system diseases	~	<1	~	1	~	<1	~	<10
Pregnancy, childbirth and puerperium	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Congenital malformations	~	<1	~	<1	0	0	0	0
Clinical and laboratory findings	48	3	9	3	~	3	~	<10
External causes of morbidity and mortality	~	<1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Factors influencing health status	~	<1	~	1	~	<1	~	<10
No details held on principal condition for medical boarding	2		0		0		0	
Withheld consent	0		0		0		0	

Source: DMICP, FMed 23 and JPA

1 Each cause of discharge category has been compiled using ICD-10 codes, please see Annex A for specific codes.

2 As recorded on the Joint Personnel Administration System (JPA) at the time of discharge.

3 Percentages are calculated from the total of all cause-coded medical discharges by gender. Data presented as "<1%" represent a percentage greater than 0% but smaller than 1%. For female 2022/23 data presented as "<10%" represent a

percentage greater than 0% but smaller than 10%. This is to prevent inadvertent disclosure of suppressed numbers, in line with JSP 200.

~ In line with JSP 200 on statistical disclosure, figures fewer than five have been suppressed. Where there was only one cell in a row or column that was fewer than five, the next appropriate number has also been suppressed so that numbers cannot simply be derived from totals.

Table 2: UK Regular army medical discharges by principal ICD-10 cause code group¹, financial year and gender², numbers and percentages³

1 April 2018 to 31 March 2023

	5 Year Total				2022/23			
	Males		Females		Males		Females	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
All medical discharges	3,976		633		822		142	
All cause coded medical discharges	3,891	100	614	100	812	100	141	100
Infectious and parasitic diseases	~	<1	~	<1	9	1	0	0
Neoplasms	38	<1	6	<1	~	<1	~	1
Blood disorders	~	<1	~	<1	~	<1	0	0
Endocrine, nutritional and metabolic diseases	~	<1	~	<1	~	1	~	<1
- Of which diabetes	16	<1	0	0	8	<1	0	0
- Of which insulin-dependent	11	<1	0	0	5	<1	0	0
- Of which non-insulin-dependent	~	<1	0	0	~	<1	0	0
Mental and behavioural disorders	1,403	36	297	48	309	38	65	46
- Of which mood disorders	510	13	130	21	138	17	27	19
- Of which depression	430	11	109	18	107	13	18	13
- Of which neurotic, stress related and somatoform	807	21	150	24	151	19	35	25
- Of which post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)	542	14	76	12	93	11	17	12
- Of which adjustment disorder	121	3	28	5	27	3	5	4
Nervous system disorders	94	2	9	1	~	3	~	<1
- Of which epilepsy	17	<1	0	0	~	<1	0	0
Eye and adnexa diseases	~	<1	~	<1	~	<1	~	<1
- Of which blindness, low vision and visual disturbance	~	<1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ear and mastoid process diseases	~	3	~	<1	~	5	~	1
- Of which hearing loss	~	2	~	<1	~	4	~	<1
- Of which noise-induced hearing loss	21	<1	0	0	7	<1	0	0
- Of which tinnitus	13	<1	0	0	7	<1	0	0
Circulatory system disorders	73	2	11	2	~	3	~	3
Respiratory system disorders	~	<1	~	<1	5	<1	0	0
- Of which asthma	~	<1	~	<1	~	<1	0	0
Digestive system disorders	50	1	5	<1	~	2	~	<1
Skin and subcutaneous tissue diseases	~	<1	~	<1	8	<1	0	0
Musculoskeletal disorders and injuries	1,821	47	234	38	305	38	48	34
- Of which injuries and disorders of the knee	387	10	46	7	90	11	9	6
- Of which knee pain	186	5	24	4	~	6	~	2
- Of which back pain	227	6	36	6	26	3	9	6
- Of which low back pain	205	5	30	5	25	3	7	5
- Of which injuries and disorders of the ankle and foot	204	5	26	4	44	5	6	4
- Of which heat injury	8	<1	0	0	~	<1	0	0
- Of which cold injury	113	3	6	<1	~	1	~	1
Genitourinary system diseases	~	<1	~	<1	~	<1	~	<1
Pregnancy, childbirth and puerperium	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Congenital malformations	~	<1	~	<1	~	<1	0	0
Clinical and laboratory findings	112	3	28	5	22	3	13	9
External causes of morbidity and mortality	~	<1	0	0	~	<1	0	0
Factors influencing health status	23	<1	5	<1	~	1	~	1
No details held on principal condition for medical boarding	84		19		10		1	
Withheld consent	1		0		0		0	

Source: DMICP, FMed 23 and JPA

1 Each cause of discharge category has been compiled using ICD-10 codes, please see Annex A for specific codes.

2 As recorded on the Joint Personnel Administration System (JPA) at the time of discharge.

3 Percentages are calculated from the total of all cause-coded medical discharges by gender. Data presented as "<1%" represent a percentage greater than 0% but smaller than 1%.

~ In line with JSP 200 on statistical disclosure, figures fewer than five have been suppressed. Where there was only one cell in a row or column that was fewer than five, the next appropriate number has also been suppressed so that numbers cannot simply be derived from totals.

Table 3: UK Regular RAF medical discharges by principal ICD-10 cause code group¹, financial year and gender², numbers and percentages³

1 April 2018 to 31 March 2023

	5 Year Total				2022/23			
	Males		Females		Males		Females	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
All medical discharges	602		232		165		51	
All cause coded medical discharges	601	100	231	100	165	100	50	100
Infectious and parasitic diseases	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Neoplasms	~	3	~	2	5	3	0	0
Blood disorders	0	0	~	<1	0	0	0	0
Endocrine, nutritional and metabolic diseases	~	<1	~	<1	~	<1	0	0
- Of which diabetes	~	<1	0	0	~	<1	0	0
- Of which insulin-dependent	~	<1	0	0	~	<1	0	0
- Of which non-insulin-dependent	~	<1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mental and behavioural disorders	239	40	118	51	81	49	25	50
- Of which mood disorders	101	17	38	16	34	21	8	16
- Of which depression	89	15	36	16	30	18	8	16
- Of which neurotic, stress related and somatoform	119	20	69	30	38	23	14	28
- Of which post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)	56	9	25	11	11	7	5	10
- Of which adjustment disorder	21	3	8	3	~	6	~	<10
Nervous system disorders	26	4	14	6	8	5	7	14
- Of which epilepsy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eye and adnexa diseases	~	<1	~	<1	0	0	0	0
- Of which blindness, low vision and visual disturbance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ear and mastoid process diseases	~	<1	~	1	0	<1	0	<1
- Of which hearing loss	~	<1	~	<1	0	0	0	0
- Of which noise-induced hearing loss	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
- Of which tinnitus	~	<1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Circulatory system disorders	~	2	~	<1	7	4	0	0
Respiratory system disorders	~	<1	0	0	~	<1	0	0
- Of which asthma	~	<1	0	0	~	<1	0	0
Digestive system disorders	~	2	~	1	~	<1	0	0
Skin and subcutaneous tissue diseases	~	1	~	1	~	2	0	0
Musculoskeletal disorders and injuries	233	39	61	26	43	26	12	24
- Of which injuries and disorders of the knee	50	8	7	3	~	7	~	<10
- Of which knee pain	~	4	~	<1	6	4	0	0
- Of which back pain	51	8	15	6	~	4	~	<10
- Of which low back pain	47	8	13	6	~	4	~	<10
- Of which injuries and disorders of the ankle and foot	21	3	6	3	5	3	0	0
- Of which heat injury	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
- Of which cold injury	~	<1	~	<1	0	0	~	<10
Genitourinary system diseases	5	<1	6	3	~	<1	~	<10
Pregnancy, childbirth and puerperium	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Congenital malformations	~	<1	~	<1	0	0	0	0
Clinical and laboratory findings	23	4	11	5	~	7	~	<10
External causes of morbidity and mortality	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Factors influencing health status	~	<1	~	1	~	2	~	<10
No details held on principal condition for medical boarding	1		1		0		1	
Withheld consent	0		0		0		0	

Source: DMICP, FMed 23 and JPA

1 Each cause of discharge category has been compiled using ICD-10 codes, please see Annex A for specific codes.

2 As recorded on the Joint Personnel Administration System (JPA) at the time of discharge.

3 Percentages are calculated from the total of all cause-coded medical discharges by gender. Data presented as "<1%" represent a percentage greater than 0% but smaller than 1%. For female 2022/23 data presented as "<10%" represent a

percentage greater than 0% but smaller than 10%. This is to prevent inadvertent disclosure of suppressed numbers, in line with JSP 200.

~ In line with JSP 200 on statistical disclosure, figures fewer than five have been suppressed. Where there was only one cell in a row or column that was fewer than five, the next appropriate number has also been suppressed so that numbers cannot simply be derived from totals.

Medical Discharges

Medical discharges are the result of a number of specialists (medical, occupational, psychological, personnel, etc.) coming to the conclusion that an individual is suffering from a medical condition that pre-empts their continued service in the armed forces. Statistics based on these discharges do not represent measures of true morbidity or pathology. At best they indicate a minimum burden of ill-health in the armed forces. Furthermore, the number and diversity of processes involved with administering a medical discharge introduce a series of time lags, as well as impact on the quality of data recorded.

The International Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems version 10 (ICD-10) was used to classify medical discharges and causes are presented by ICD-10 chapter. As a result of interest, some ICD-10 groups were provided in more detail allowing the presentation of specific conditions. Please see Annex A for a full list of ICD-10 codes for each chapter and specific condition.

Information on medical discharges was sourced from electronic medical records (DMICP) and manually entered paper documents (FMed 23s). The primary purpose of these medical documents is to ensure the appropriate administration of each individual patient's discharge. Statistical analysis and reporting are secondary functions.

Principal condition is the first principal ICD 10 code on the medical discharge documents (DMICP/FMed 23). Contributory cause contains all other principal conditions and any contributory conditions on the medical discharge paper (DMICP/FMed 23).

Defence Statistics release annual updates on medical discharges in the UK armed forces as an Official Statistic publication. The last statistical release was on 13 July 2023 which presented data up to 31 March 2023. The latest report can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/medical-discharges-among-uk-service-personnel-statistics-index>

Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) is the most accurate source for demographic information for UK armed forces personnel and was used to gather information on a person's service and gender.

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 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/>.

Yours sincerely,

Defence Statistics Health

Annex A

ICD-10 cause code group description	ICD-10 cause chapter codes
Infectious and parasitic diseases	A00 to B99
Neoplasms	C00 to D48
Blood disorders	D50 to D89
Endocrine, nutritional and metabolic diseases	E00 to E90
- Of which diabetes	E10 to E14
- Of which insulin-dependent	E10
- Of which non-insulin-dependent	E11
Mental and behavioural disorders	F00 to F99
- Of which mood disorders	F30 to F39
- Of which depression	F32 and F33
- Of which neurotic, stress related and somatoform	F40 to F48
- Of which post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)	F431
- Of which adjustment disorder	F432
Nervous system disorders	G00 to G99
- Of which epilepsy	G40
Eye and adnexa diseases	H00 to H59
- Of which blindness, low vision and visual disturbance	H53 to H54
Ear and mastoid process diseases	H60 to H95
- Of which hearing loss	H833 and H90 to H91
- Of which noise-induced hearing loss	H833
- Of which tinnitus	H931
Circulatory system disorders	I00 to I99
Respiratory system disorders	J00 to J99
- Of which asthma	J45 and J46
Digestive system disorders	K00 to K93
Skin and subcutaneous tissue diseases	L00 to L99
Musculoskeletal disorders and Injuries	M00 to M99, and S00 to T98
- Of which injuries and disorders of the knee	Footnote 1
- Of which knee pain	M2556
- Of which back pain	M544 to M546, M548, M549
- Of which low back pain	M544 to 5
- Of which injuries and disorders of the ankle and foot	Footnote 2
- Of which heat injury	T67
- Of which cold injury	T33 to T35 and T68 to T69
Genitourinary system diseases	N00 to N99
Pregnancy, childbirth and puerperium	O00 to O99
Congenital malformations	Q00 to Q99
Clinical and laboratory findings	R00 to R99
External Causes of Morbidity and Mortality	V01 to Y98
Factors influencing health status	Z00 to Z99

¹ Injuries and disorders of the knee have been compiled using ICD-10 codes M17, M22, M23, S800, S810, S82, S83, S89 as well as any of the following that have a '6' as the fifth digit: M00 to M13, M19, M21, M24 to M25, M62, M66, M70 to M73, M76 to M91 and M94. Please note, where an ICD-10 code ends with a fifth digit of '6', it is not possible to distinguish between the knee and tibia/fibula and therefore figures may be an over-estimate.

² Injuries and disorders of the ankle and foot have been compiled using ICD-10 codes M201-M206, M670, M926, M927, S90-S99, S828, T250 as well as any of the following that have a '7' as the fifth digit: M00 to M13, M17, M19, M21 to M25, M62, M65, M66, M70 to M73, M76 to M91 and M94.