



Ministry
of Defence

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18 August 2023

Dear [REDACTED],

Thank you for your request of 24 July 2023 for the following information:

"Please can you state the number of Scottish soldiers, if any, prescribed or given Mefloquine (Lariam) since the MOD changed its policy on antimalarial drugs on 12 September 2016? Please break the figures down by year."

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 all the information in scope of your request is held. Some of the information falls within the scope of the absolute exemption provided for at section 40 (personnel data) of the FOI Act and has been withheld.

I can advise that some of the information in scope of your request falls entirely within the scope of the exemption provided for at Sections 40 (Personal Data) of the FOIA and has been redacted. Section 40(2) has been applied to some of the information in order to protect personal information as governed by the Data Protection Act 2018. Section 40(2) requires the Department to conduct a balancing exercise, this exercise involves balancing the rights and interests of individuals against the legitimate interests in disclosure, this is not the same as carrying out the public interest test associated with certain exemptions in FOIA. The balancing exercise is carried out in order to decide whether the absolute exemption in section 40(2) is engaged. In particular, there is no assumption of disclosure in the legitimate interests test, as there is with qualified exemptions. The outcome of the balancing exercise has resulted in numbers fewer than five being suppressed to prevent inadvertent disclosure of individual identities.

Between 12 September 2016 and 1 April 2023, **eight** Scottish soldiers had a prescription for Mefloquine entered into their electronic medical record. A breakdown by calendar year is shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Scottish soldiers¹ with a prescription for Mefloquine by calendar year, numbers^{2,3}

12 September 2016 to 1 April 2023

Calendar Year	n
All	8
2016 ⁴	~
2017	~
2018	0
2019	0
2020	0
2021	0
2022	~
2023	0

Source: DMICP & JPA.

¹ Soldiers includes Army personnel that are not Officers.

² Some soldiers were prescribed mefloquine in multiple years and have been counted in every year that they have a prescription, but only once in the overall total. Therefore, the sum of each year does not equal the total.

³ In line with JSP 200, the suppression methodology has been applied to ensure individuals are not inadvertently identified dependent on the risk of disclosure. Numbers fewer than five have been suppressed and presented as '~'.

⁴ Includes data from 12 September 2016 to 31 December 2016 only.

Under section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) you may find it useful to note:

Soldiers include all UK Army regular and reservist, trained and untrained personnel who are not Officers. This response relates to all personnel who had a DMICP record and were serving between 1 September 2016 and 1 April 2023 and is not limited to the currently serving population.

Reservist personnel have been included. However, the requestor should please note that the majority of reservist personnel receive their primary medical care from the NHS. Any personnel who were prescribed mefloquine by the NHS and have not informed the MOD were not included in the figures presented for the number of personnel with a prescription entered into their military medical record.

Information was derived from the Defence Medical Information Capability Programme (DMICP). Data on prescriptions for antimalarial drugs used in this response were derived from the integrated primary health record (iHR) within the DMICP data warehouse. Searches were conducted for the following antimalarial drug names:

- "Lariam"
- "Mefloquine Hydrochloride".

Please note that data is related to the prescription of the drug, it does not ensure that the patient went on to take the drug. If any drug has been entered as free text only in a patients' medical record it will not be included in the figures presented as this information is not available in the data warehouse, therefore numbers should be treated as a minimum.

Personnel are identified as Scottish using a national identity field on JPA. Please note that some personnel do not have a recorded value in their national identity field while the national identity of other personnel is 'British or Mixed British'. Therefore, personnel may consider themselves as Scottish, but if they have not recorded this in their national identity field then it was not possible to categorise them as Scottish for this response.

Data is up to 1 April 2023 as this is the as at date of the most recently published Mefloquine Official Statistic.

DMICP is a live data source and is subject to change. Date of extract 25 April 2023.

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, rank and nationality.

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

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 (Analysis Directorate)