Medicines & Healthcare products
Regulatory Agency

10 South Colonnade
Canary Wharf
London
E14 4PU
United Kingdom
gov.uk/mhra

[redacted]

9th August 2023

Dear [redacted]

FOI 23/498

Thank you for your email dated 12th July 2023 where you requested the following:

- The time scale of the number of Yellow Card reports for the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine given at 1 year old and the number of children that were vaccinated at the time of receiving the MMR vaccine.
- A chart of the ADRs from the past 10 years of how many MMR vaccinations and how many ADR reports received following vaccination.
- Further information regarding the content of the MMR vaccine, in particular "a clear understanding of the aborted human cells and the content of heavy metals".

Firstly, unfortunately we do not hold data on the number of vaccinations given in the population. However, NHS Digital does hold data on childhood vaccination coverage. The MMR vaccine has been part of the routine childhood immunisation programme since 1988 and since this time many millions of children have received this vaccine in the UK alone.

I can confirm that between 1st August 2013 and 1st August 2023, the MHRA has received 2874 UK reports of suspected side effects to an MMR vaccine. Please be aware that this number is lower than in your previous FOI request since in the current request you asked for the data in a 10-year period. Please see Table 1 below containing information requested, however as previously mentioned, we do not hold data on the number of vaccinations given in the population.

Table 1: UK, suspected spontaneous ADR reports received each year for MMR between 1st August 2013 - 1st August 2023.

Year	Number of reports
2013	97
2014	180
2015	203
2016	228
2017	411
2018	398
2019	432
2020	299
2021	241
2022	242
2023	143

It is also important to note that in the UK, the MMR vaccine is given alongside other vaccines as part of the routine childhood immunisation schedule. Details of the current UK immunisation schedule can be found here.

Further to this and as you will know from your previous FOI response, a reported reaction does not necessarily mean it has been caused by the vaccine. Each year, millions of doses of routine vaccinations are given in the UK alone, and when any vaccine is administered to large numbers of people, some recipients will inevitably experience illness following vaccination. For a list of recognised side effects to MMR vaccines please visit our website which provides the product information for different brands of MMR vaccines.

It is also important to note that the number of reports received via the Yellow Card scheme does not directly equate to the number of people who suffer adverse reactions and therefore cannot be used to determine the incidence of a reaction or compare the safety profile of different vaccines. ADR reporting rates are influenced by the seriousness of ADRs, their ease of recognition, the extent of use of a particular medicine, and may be stimulated by promotion and publicity about a drug. Reporting tends to be highest for newly introduced medicines during the first one to two years on the market and then falls over time.

The Yellow Card scheme is voluntary for healthcare professionals and members of the public. It is also mandatory for pharmaceutical companies to send us any reports they receive. All adverse drug reaction reports are added to our database and are assessed together with additional sources of evidence, by a team of safety experts. Additionally, we apply statistical techniques that can tell us if we are seeing more events than we would expect to see, based on what is known about background rates of illness in the absence of vaccination. This aims to account for factors such as coincidental illness. We also look at the clinical characteristics to see if new patterns of illness are emerging that could indicate a new safety concern. We would not want to deter any reporter from submitting reports to the scheme by only allowing for reports where a healthcare professional has confirmed an association with the medicine or vaccine. The processes we have in place are designed to mitigate against any limitations in the data received through the scheme.

[redacted] we are not in a position to offer medical advice on individual cases, please be assured that as with all vaccines included in the routine immunisation programme, the MMR vaccine has a good and well-established safety profile and is a very effective vaccine. [redacted]

With reference to your query regarding the ingredients in MMR vaccines, the full ingredient list for all MHRA licenced medicines and vaccines can be found on our website. You can view the Patient Information leaflets (PIL) for the various brands of MMR vaccine available. Section 6 of the PIL lists the ingredients of a medicine or vaccine. Please be assured that this vaccine does not contain aborted foetal cells.

I hope the information provided is helpful, but if you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of this response; and can be addressed to this email address.

Yours sincerely,

FOI Team,
Safety and Surveillance
Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency