

Freedom of Information Request: Correspondence Related to Pfizer Vaccine Study in The Lancet

Importance of the Request

On July 9, 2023, I submitted a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to the Israeli Ministry of Health (Request No. 669886, Reference 278874223) to obtain email correspondence related to a study on the efficacy and safety of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine (BNT162b2), published in The Lancet ([available here](#)). The request included two parts:

Correspondence between Dr. Sharon Alroy-Preis, a senior Ministry official, and The Lancet editors, particularly Josephine Gibson and Richard Horton, mentioning Professors Norman Fenton and/or Martin Neil.

Correspondence between Pfizer researchers involved in the study and Dr. Alroy-Preis.

This request is of utmost importance because the The Lancet study, co-authored by Dr. Alroy-Preis, significantly influenced COVID-19 policies in Israel and globally, promoting widespread vaccination. However, researchers like Norman Fenton and Martin Neil have raised serious concerns about the study's reliability, arguing its findings conflict with real-world data and suggesting potential biases or methodological flaws. Releasing the requested correspondence would shed light on the study's publication process, the Ministry's role, and how scientific critiques were handled. Transparency is critical for rebuilding public trust, especially given the 2024 Israeli State Comptroller's report, which exposed deficiencies in managing vaccine adverse event reports.

Developments and Why the Information Remains Withheld

On December 11, 2023, Adv. Sivan Dadon, Acting Director of Public Information at the Ministry, rejected the request:

Part 1: Claimed no correspondence existed with The Lancet editors, citing Section 8(3) of the FOI Law (non-existent information).

Part 2: Deemed correspondence with Pfizer researchers internal (drafts and consultations), confidential, and likely to create a "chilling effect" on collaboration, citing Sections 9(b)(1), 9(b)(4), and 9(b)(7) of the FOI Law.

In response, on December 12, 2023, I emailed Adv. Dadon:

Part 1: I noted that Josephine Gibson, The Lancet's deputy editor, closed a letter of concern from professors about the study, attaching her email as proof, and requested a thorough review.

Part 2: I argued the study shaped global policy, was suspected of fraud by researchers, and contradicted real-world data. I questioned why the Ministry protects Pfizer, a commercial entity, over public health, and urged reconsideration.

As of April 19, 2025, I have received no response to this email, and the Ministry has ignored my arguments and evidence. This raises serious questions: Why did the Ministry claim no correspondence with The Lancet editors despite evidence to the contrary? Why refuse to disclose Pfizer correspondence, potentially concealing critical information about a study impacting public health? This conduct continues to erode public trust, especially in a pandemic where transparency was essential.

Continuing the Fight

The struggle for transparency persists. I am considering filing a complaint with the Governmental FOI Unit for the Ministry's failure to respond to my follow-up email and exploring an administrative petition to the Jerusalem Administrative Court under Section 17 of the FOI Law to

compel disclosure. Releasing this information would enable evidence-based public and scientific debate on the The Lancet study's reliability, clarify the Ministry's involvement, and help build a more transparent and accountable health system.