

Expert Committee on Clinical Events Assessment Following COVID-19 Immunisation assessed a suspected serious adverse event following COVID-19 vaccination

The Expert Committee on Clinical Events Assessment Following COVID-19 Immunisation (Expert Committee) convened an urgent meeting today (March 3) to assess a suspected serious adverse event following COVID-19 vaccination. The Expert Committee preliminarily considered that the event and the vaccination did not have direct causal association but the full autopsy report would be required to conclude the assessment.

The Department of Health (DH) received a report from the Hospital Authority (HA) last night (March 2) that a 63-year-old man suffered from acute shortness of breath with cough and attended Queen Elizabeth Hospital by himself in the early morning of February 28. The patient's condition deteriorated rapidly and he eventually succumbed in the same morning. According to the HA, the patient was a heavy smoker, had history of diabetes mellitus, hypertension, hyperlipidemia, obesity and suspected ischemic heart disease. He received a dose of CoronaVac COVID-19 vaccine at the Kwun Chung Sports Centre Community Vaccination Centre in Jordan on February 26. The case has been referred by the HA to the Coroner to follow up.

The preliminary information of autopsy revealed that the patient had serious coronary heart disease which led to acute myocardial infarction and pulmonary oedema and thus resulted in respiratory failure before passing away. The Expert Committee reviewed the case with all available information during the meeting. Having considered the medical conditions and history of the patient as well as relevant clinical data, available information related to the vaccine and preliminary autopsy findings, the Expert Committee conducted a causality assessment based on the algorithm of the World Health Organization (WHO). The Expert Committee considered that the patient's outcome was not directly associated with COVID-19 vaccination. However, the full autopsy report would be required for the Expert Committee to conclude the causality assessment.

"Based on available data, there is no particular safety concern detected from the CoronaVac COVID-19 vaccine. According to the product information of the vaccine, patients with uncontrolled severe chronic diseases should not receive the vaccine. Patients with severe chronic illness should use the vaccine with caution; if necessary, delay vaccination after doctor's assessment," a DH spokesperson urged.