

Expert Committee on Clinical Events Assessment Following COVID-19 Immunisation assesses serious adverse events relating to COVID-19 vaccination

The Expert Committee on Clinical Events Assessment Following COVID-19 Immunisation, set up under the Department of Health (DH) to provide an independent assessment on the potential causal link between Adverse Events Following Immunisation (AEFIs) and COVID-19 vaccination in Hong Kong, convened a meeting today (June 5) to assess serious adverse events relating to COVID-19 vaccination.

According to the World Health Organization, an AEFI is any medical occurrence that follows immunisation and that does not necessarily have a causal relationship with the usage of the vaccine. The DH has put in place a pharmacovigilance system for COVID-19 immunisation, and is partnering with the University of Hong Kong to conduct an active surveillance programme for Adverse Events of Special Interest (AESI) under the COVID-19 Vaccines Adverse Events Response and Evaluation Programme (CARE Programme). The main purpose of the pharmacovigilance system is to detect potential signals of possible side effects of the vaccines.

As of May 31, about 20.81 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines had been administered for members of the public in Hong Kong. Around 6.92 million people had received at least one vaccine dose. In the same period, the DH received 8 122 reports of adverse events (0.04 per cent of total vaccine doses administered), including 120 death cases with vaccination within 14 days before they passed away (0.0006 per cent of total vaccine doses administered).

The Expert Committee had already assessed these 120 death cases and concluded that 118 death cases had no causal relationship with vaccination. In the remaining two cases a causal relationship with vaccination could not be established. The Expert Committee considered that there has been no unusual pattern identified so far, and it will continue to closely monitor the situation and collect data for assessment.

The Expert Committee has also reviewed available clinical data and information for conducting causality assessments of other serious or unexpected AEFIs and AESIs. The results will be included in the updated safety monitoring report (as at May 31) to be published at the Government's designated website on June 9. In addition, information related to AEFIs of COVID-19 vaccines and relevant statistics will also be released in the "Update on monitoring COVID-19 vaccination" press release and the

Government's designated website regularly.