

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 independent assessment on the potential causal link between Adverse Events Following Immunisation (AEFIs) and COVID-19 vaccination in Hong Kong, convened a meeting today (September 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 August 31, about 20.85 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 8 132 reports of adverse events (0.04 per cent of total vaccine doses administered). There was no new AEFI report involving death received since June 1, 2023.

â€‹The Expert Committee has reviewed available clinical data and information for conducting causality assessment of serious or unexpected AEFIs and AESIs. The results will be included in the updated safety monitoring report (as at August 31) to be published on the Government's designated website on September 8.