

Government clarifies media report on vaccination of COVID-19 fatal cases

With regard to a misleading media report today (March 20) on vaccination of fatal COVID-19 cases which was based on analysis of data claimed to be from the Hospital Authority, a Government spokesperson expressed regret and reiterated that it is of utmost importance to boost vaccination among the elderly now. Both COVID-19 vaccines available in Hong Kong are safe and highly effective in protecting against severe disease and death from COVID-19 infection.

The Government has been monitoring the fatal cases tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 in Hong Kong. According to the preliminary data analysed by the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health on the fatal cases in hand at current stage, about 88.3 per cent of the first 5 435 fatal cases in the fifth wave of epidemic have not received two doses of COVID-19 vaccines. The case fatality rate of infected individuals who received at least two doses of vaccines is 0.09 per cent, while that of those who received one dose and unvaccinated are 0.7 per cent and 2.58 per cent respectively. This shows that vaccination definitely help reduce the case fatality rate.

Currently, about 80 per cent of the elderly aged 80 or above received CoronaVac vaccines and about 20 per cent received Comirnaty vaccines. Preliminary analysis of the 3 837 death cases involving elderly aged 80 or above (accounting for over 70 per cent of all fatal cases) showed that about 74 per cent (2 837 cases) are unvaccinated, amounting to a case fatality rate of 15 per cent after infection. The fatality rate of individuals aged 80 or above who have received two doses of COVID-19 vaccine is 2.62 per cent, while that of those who received one dose is 5.59 per cent. In addition, the case fatality rate of that age group who received one dose of CoronaVac vaccine is 5.83 and 3.44 per cent for those who received one dose of Comirnaty vaccine. The figures dropped to 2.95 and 1.51 per cent respectively for those who received two doses of CoronaVac and Comirnaty.

The Government emphasised that the analysis of vaccine type received by fatal cases is relatively complicated and investigation on the particular situation, such as age and history of chronic disease of each fatal case, is needed. The factor that more elderly people to receive CoronaVac vaccine should also be taken into consideration and conclusion should not be made casually. Data of fatal cases can now be found at www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/pdf/5th_wave_statistics.pdf.

The spokesman called on members of the public who are not yet vaccinated, especially senior citizens, chronic patients and other immunocompromised persons who face a much higher chance of death after COVID-19 infection, to get vaccinated as early as possible for better self-protection.