

Scientific Committees under CHP update interim recommendations on COVID-19 vaccination

The Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases and the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases under the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (JSC) convened a meeting today (April 22), joined by the Chief Executive's expert advisory panel (EAP), to discuss and update recommendations on the use of mRNA COVID-19 vaccines in pregnant and lactating women and the use of AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine.

The JSC-EAP acknowledged there is emerging data on the use of mRNA COVID-19 vaccines in pregnant and lactating women. Given there are no known risks associated with administering mRNA COVID-19 vaccines to lactating women, they are recommended to receive the mRNA vaccines as for the rest of the population. Pregnant women who consider mRNA COVID-19 vaccines should consult their obstetricians on the risks and benefits of vaccination.

During the meeting, the JSC-EAP discussed the use of AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine. Reports of extremely rare adverse events of thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome (TTS) following vaccination with AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine was noted. Causal relationship between the vaccine and TTS is possible but still under investigation. Currently, evidence and data on the occurrence of TTS following vaccination of AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine is still emerging. In view of the local epidemiological situation and the availability of alternative COVID-19 vaccines in Hong Kong, there is no need for the introduction of AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine in Hong Kong.

In addition, Members discussed the possibility of exempting close contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases from the existing quarantine measures, if they are fully vaccinated with COVID-19 vaccines. In view of limited data, and concerns about emerging COVID-19 variants, the JSC-EAP considered that the current quarantine practice on close contacts should continue until more supporting evidence becomes available.

Details of the interim recommendation are available at CHP website www.chp.gov.hk/en/static/24008.html.