

Transcript of remarks by SFH at media session

Following is the transcript of remarks made by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, after attending a radio programme today (March 20):

Reporter: BioNtech vaccine is effective against most of the mutated strains and the Sinovac vaccine basically doesn't have any information. Are you worried that people will hesitate with the Sinovac vaccine as it may not have enough protection against the mutated strains? Will you consider also finding other types of vaccine?

Secretary for Food and Health: According to the Joint Scientific Committee's deliberation, they have already given information about the protection of different vaccines against those new variants of concern. According to the experts, the BioNtech vaccine is able to protect against some of the variants of concern. For the Sinovac vaccine, they are still waiting for further information from Sinovac. The experts will continue to monitor the situation and review any data provided to the Department of Health.

Reporter: Do you think the AstraZeneca vaccine is still suitable for vaccination programme in Hong Kong as it's not effective against all types of mutated strains so far?

Secretary for Food and Health: The Hong Kong Government has previously signed advance purchase agreement with the AstraZeneca. We recognise many of the news reports in different countries about the AstraZeneca vaccine. We also notice there are news from the World Health Organization and also some countries most recently said that all the adverse effects are not related to or do not have a direct relationship with the vaccination of the AstraZeneca vaccine. We will continue to monitor the situation and the Department of Health has asked the manufacturer for further information. Regarding procedure, if the AstraZeneca vaccine is going to be authorised in Hong Kong, they would have to first apply to us and the Advisory Panel on COVID-19 Vaccines will review the data first before it recommends for authorisation by the Hong Kong Government. This process has not started yet so we are continuously reviewing the situation.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)