

Update on monitoring COVID-19 vaccination

In the preceding week till 11.59pm on August 15, the Department of Health (DH) received 216 reports (Note 1) of adverse events following COVID-19 immunisation. No death case was reported by the Hospital Authority (HA) involving individuals who had received vaccines within 14 days before they passed away and had potential association with vaccination.

As at 8pm on August 15, over 6.63 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines had been administered for members of the public. Around 3.73 million people had received at least one dose of vaccine, accounting for 54.8 per cent of the population aged 12 or above. The DH received 5 142 reports (Note 1) of adverse events (0.08 per cent of the total vaccine doses administered). Among the death cases concerning persons who had been vaccinated, including 33 cases (Note 2) with vaccination within 14 days before they passed away (0.0005 per cent of the total vaccine doses administered), none of the death cases was associated with vaccination.

As at August 15, the Expert Committee on Clinical Events Assessment Following COVID-19 Immunisation (the Expert Committee) had concluded that 18 death cases had no causal relationship with vaccination, and preliminarily considered that nine cases were not associated with vaccination. The six remaining cases were pending assessment. The Expert Committee considered that there is no unusual pattern identified so far, and will continue to closely monitor the relevant situation and collect data for assessment.

According to information from the HA, during the period from July 19 to August 15, the ratio of death cases out of those without a vaccination record was 85.4 cases for every 100 000 people, whereas the ratio of death cases for those with a vaccination record was 3.1 cases for every 100 000 people. The overall death rate is similar to that recorded in the past three years. Out of those without a vaccination record, the ratio of death cases with acute stroke or acute myocardial infarction was 3.6 cases for every 100 000 people, whereas the ratio of death cases under the same category for those with a vaccination record was 0.3 cases for every 100 000 people. Furthermore, the ratio of miscarriage cases out of those without a vaccination record was 33.2 cases for every 100 000 people, whereas the ratio of miscarriage cases for those who had a vaccination record was 7.3 cases for every 100 000 people. Based on the statistical analysis of the above figures, there is no evidence that vaccination increases the risk of death or miscarriage for recipients. The relevant reference statistics will be uploaded to the thematic website for the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme.

The majority of non-death cases of adverse events received so far are relatively minor cases. The relevant details can be found in the "Report on the Safety Monitoring of COVID-19 Vaccines in Hong Kong" (www.drugoffice.gov.hk/eps/do/en/doc/Safety_Monitoring_of_COVID-19_Vaccines_in_Hong_Kong.pdf).

"The Comirnaty and CoronaVac vaccines are highly effective in preventing severe cases and deaths from COVID-19. They can provide protection to those vaccinated to prevent serious complications and even deaths after infection. We appeal again to persons who are not yet vaccinated, especially senior citizens, chronic patients and other immunocompromised persons who are most likely to be affected by COVID-19, to get vaccinated as soon as possible for better self-protection before the fifth wave strikes in Hong Kong," a Government spokesman said.

Note 1: Provisional figures. In the preceding week till 11.59pm on August 15, the DH received four reports of suspected myocarditis or pericarditis involving adolescents aged 12 to 15. The four cases respectively involved a male aged 12, a male aged 13 and two males aged 14. They experienced chest pains two days after receiving the second dose of the Comirnaty vaccine. Their conditions are stable.

Note 2: In the preceding week till 11.59pm on August 15, the DH received three death reports involving individuals who had received COVID-19 vaccination within 14 days before passing away. The cases involved three males aged from 54 to 62. There is no clinical evidence that the incidents arose from vaccination. The cases are pending assessment by the Expert Committee.