

Update on monitoring COVID-19 vaccination

In the preceding week till 11.59pm on May 23, the Department of Health (DH) received 217 reports (Note 1) of adverse events following COVID-19 immunisation, including two death cases reported by the Hospital Authority (HA) involving individuals who had received COVID-19 vaccines.

As at 8pm on May 23, about 2.14 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines had been administered for members of the public. Around 1.25 million people had received at least one dose of vaccine, accounting for 19.1 per cent of the population aged 16 or above. The DH received 3 107 reports (Note 1) of adverse events (0.14 per cent of the total vaccine doses administered), including 21 death cases with vaccination within 14 days before they passed away (0.001 per cent of total vaccine doses administered).

As at May 23, the Expert Committee on Clinical Events Assessment Following COVID-19 Immunisation (Note 2) had concluded that eight death cases had no causal relationship with vaccination, and preliminarily considered that 24 cases were not associated with vaccination. Two 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 April 26 to May 23, the ratio of death cases out of those without a vaccination record was 54.0 cases for every 100 000 people, whereas the ratio of death cases for those with a vaccination record was 2.9 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 2.9 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 23.3 cases for every 100 000 people, whereas the ratio of miscarriage cases for those who had a vaccination record was 4.0 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).

Note 1: Provisional figures

Note 2: The Expert Committee on Clinical Events Assessment Following COVID-19 Immunisation performs continuous monitoring of the possible adverse events following administration of COVID-19 vaccines, and provides professional views and suggestions on safety monitoring of the authorised COVID-19 vaccines. The membership list and the key functions of the Expert Committee can be found at the following website (www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/en/expert).