

More data on vaccines could dispel doubt



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by HARIZAH KAMEL / pic by BLOOMBERG

THE additional 182,520 doses of Pfizer Inc-BioNTech SE vaccine are scheduled to arrive today amid rising uncertainties among the general public that still need to be addressed by the authorities.

Health experts have called for more engagement and transparency by the government about the entire inoculation process, especially with the growing anti-vaccine sentiments that have been shared on various social media platforms.

Osel Group chief clinical and innovative scientist Dr Kris See told *The Malaysian Reserve (TMR)* the arrival of the vaccine brings the nation's collective fight to another level.

“The existing misinformation, sometimes even among medical professionals, could largely be due to non-transparency of the process or even lack of engagements with the people at grassroots.

"Fear of something unknown is totally understandable. However, in my personal opinion, the authorities should work hand-in-hand with the private sectors, media or even celebrities to further share the message of the importance of vaccination," he said.

Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and Health DG Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah are among the first individuals to be inoculated today, which is viewed by many as a signal that the vaccine is safe and ready to be administered to Malaysians.



Dr See said transformational leadership is needed in such times of crisis and key opinion leaders of the society should consistently engage with the communities to address their fears and concerns even after inoculation.

People should get vaccinated with whatever effective vaccine they have access to because this will help protect themselves and their communities by impacting the global viral load, he added.

“Continuing precautions like mask-wearing and physical distancing even after you get vaccinated will have a much greater impact on how well the vaccine keeps you safe than which vaccine product you receive,” he said.

Currently, the Health Ministry has been working tirelessly with several quarters including the Prime Minister’s Department, the National Security Council and other ministries to ensure the public get genuine facts about the vaccines.

Malaysian Integrated Medical Professionals Association president Dr Muhamad Hazizi Muhamad Hasani said one should not simply share personal opinions about the vaccine from a non-reputable person.

“In regards to the Covid-19 vaccine, the government had other resistances, not only from the anti-vaxxers but also several medical doctors who work in private sectors and individuals with specific vaccine preference or suspicious agenda.

“These groups have caused panic and anxiety among communities by fear-mongering methods and confusing listeners with scary medical jargons. Some exaggerate issues regarding adverse events following immunisation, and question the effectiveness of a newly developed vaccine in a short duration of time,” he told *TMR*.

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Dr Muhamad Hazizi said Malaysians, particularly netizens, should get proper information regarding the vaccines from reputable medical specialists who oftentimes will be called to give their opinion and information in a formal interview on radios, televisions and newspapers.

“We can also look at other countries that have successfully controlled Covid-19 transmission after a mass vaccination programme.

“We can study through these countries on possible dangerous side effects which are extremely low and usually caused by other factors that are not directly related to the vaccine itself,” he added.

Coordinating Minister for National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme Khairy Jamaluddin Abu Bakar, who is also Science, Technology and Innovation minister, said the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, produced in Belgium, is scheduled to arrive via the Kuala Lumpur International Airport in the morning from Singapore.

“The vaccine will be distributed to states that have yet to receive supply,” he said in a press conference after conducting a simulation of the National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme yesterday.

He added that the vaccine will be distributed in Kedah, Melaka, Negri Sembilan and Perak today, while Pahang, Terengganu, Kelantan, Sabah, Sarawak and the Federal Territory of Labuan will receive the supply tomorrow.

[Read our previous report here](#)

The vaccine is here



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