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COVID-19 VACCINE EFFICACY

Data validates Sinovac's effectiveness

A FORMER health minister's statement on Sinovac's effectiveness contains errors that need correction because misconceptions can hinder our vaccination programme.

Contrary to what he says, there is good published medical data on Sinovac's effectiveness in an actual setting.

On July 2, the New England Journal of Medicine published a report on the use of Sinovac in Chile from February to May, looking at 4.2 million fully vaccinated people compared with 5.5 million unvaccinated residents.

Sinovac was found to reduce infection by 65.9 per cent, reduce hospitalisation by 87.5 per cent, reduce ICU admission by 90.3 per cent and reduce deaths by 86.3 per cent.

Meanwhile, a Pfizer trial reported an efficacy of 95 per cent, but analysed only 170 Covid-19 cases.

But the Israel Health Ministry said the effectiveness of the Pfizer vaccine against Covid-19 infection was 64 per cent, though it was still 93 per cent effective against hospitalisation and serious illness.

Therefore, there is not much difference between Sinovac and Pfizer vaccines in practical use. Both are effective at preventing severe disease and hospitalisation, but less effective against mild or asymptomatic Covid-19.

Our government's temporary suspension of Sinovac use has nothing to do with vaccine efficacy but a matter of logistics.

After ordering and receiving 32 million doses of Sinovac, almost 16 million doses have been given, meaning that the remaining 16 million doses are reserved as the second dose for those who have received their first injection.

Pfizer stocks have not been used up quickly, and it is only natural and logical to use up this vaccine for those who are coming in for the first dose.

This point has been clarified by Covid-19 National Immunisation Programme Coordinating Minister Khairy Jamaluddin and Phammanaga.

Sinovac will still be available at private healthcare centres for those wishing to use it, showing that the Health Ministry is happy with its efficacy and continued use.

It is important not to confuse a logistical issue with vaccine efficacy since such misunderstanding can hinder efforts to encourage people to get vaccinated.

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