

Editorial

Covid-19 Vaccine for Children

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Editor

In the whole world, 196 countries affected with Covid-19. About 157500000 cases are positive and 3300000 death occur in the world up till now. Worst affected countries are USA, UK, Brazil, Italy, France, Spain, Mexico, Russia, Columbia, Germany and India.

Canada approved the use of the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine in children aged 12 years and up, becoming the first nation to do so.

“This is the first vaccine authorised in Canada for the prevention of Covid-19 in children and marks a significant milestone in Canada’s fight against the pandemic,” Canada Chief Medical Advisor Supriya Sharma told.

Data from a clinical trial in the United States involving more than 2,000 youths who were given two doses showed it is as safe for adolescents as it is for adults, she said.

There were no cases of Covid-19 recorded among the vaccinated children. In adults it has been shown to be at least 95 percent effective in preventing infection.

The vaccine was authorised in December for use in Canadians 16 and older. Other manufacturers of the four vaccines authorised in Canada -- the others are Astra Zeneca, Johnson & Johnson and Moderna -- are conducting or planning their own studies in children as young as six months old.

Sharma said Health Canada will expedite reviews of those results. Since the start of the pandemic, about 20 percent of all Covid-19 cases in Canada were recorded in people under the age of 19. As of Wednesday, nearly 1.25 million people in this country have been diagnosed with Covid-19. More than 24,000 died.

While younger people are less likely to experience serious illness from Covid, Sharma said, “having access to a safe and effective vaccine will help control the disease’s spread to their families and friends, some of whom may be at higher risk complications.” “It’ll also support the return to a more normal life for our children who’ve had such a hard time over the past year,” she said.

The United States is reportedly expected to authorise the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for use in 12-15 year olds next week.

Meanwhile, Malaysia will tighten corona virus curbs in the capital to combat a fresh spike in cases, with only essential businesses allowed to operate and restaurant dining-in banned.

The Southeast Asian nation was hit by a fresh Covid-19 outbreak at the start of 2021, prompting authorities to re-introduce curbs not seen since the start of the pandemic and declare a state of emergency.

Infection rates fell and measures were eased -- but cases started climbing again in recent weeks as people went out to shop and socialised more. Kuala Lumpur, Defence Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob said at least 17 new infection clusters were detected in the city last month.

Health authorities in the country of 32 million reported 3,744 Covid-19 cases -- around half in the capital and neighbouring Selangor state — and 17 deaths.

Daily cases have frequently topped 3,000 in recent days. Malaysia’s outbreak remains less severe than in many other countries, with officials reporting over 400,000 cases and almost 1,600 deaths. The World Health Organization announced it would set up a global data hub in Berlin to analyse information on emerging pandemic threats, filling the gaps exposed by Covid-19. The WHO Hub for Pandemic and Epidemic Intelligence, which will start operating later this year, is set to analyse data quickly and in detail, in order to predict, prevent, detect, prepare for and respond to risks worldwide.

The hub will try to get ahead of the game, looking for pre-signals that go far beyond current systems that monitor publicly available information for signs of emerging outbreaks. “The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed gaps in the global systems for pandemic and epidemic intelligence,” WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told journalists.

“There will be more viruses that will emerge with the potential for sparking epidemics or pandemics. “Viruses move fast. But data can move even faster. With the right information, countries and communities can stay one step ahead of an emerging risk and save lives.”