



health

Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



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INTERNAL MEMO

Date:	15 December 2020		
To:	Minister ZL Mkhize, Honourable Minister of Health	From:	Prof B Schoub: Chair of the Ministerial Advisory Committee (MAC) on COVID-19 Vaccines

INTERIM ADVISORY KEY CONSIDERATIONS IN THE SELECTION OF COVID-19 VACCINE(S)

Problem Statement

Background

Currently there are 273 Covid-19 vaccine candidates, of which 58 are undergoing clinical testing. As at 9 December 2020, a total of 14 vaccine candidates are in phase 3 clinical trials and of these, four (4) have released either preliminary or recently published data on safety and efficacy ranging from 70% to 95%.

The COVAX Facility indicated that countries would be allowed to state their preferences for a vaccine that would be suited to their context. The NDoH has committed to vaccinate at least 10% of the South African population in 2021 with doses procured from the COVAX Facility.

Although much is still unknown about the vaccine candidates, large-scale Covid-19 vaccination has begun with the UK and in the US. For a number of reasons, not all candidates will be suitable for implementation in South Africa. This advisory briefly describes the framework for selecting the most appropriate vaccine for South Africa regardless of whether the vaccine is purchased through the COVAX Facility or directly from the manufacturer.

Aim of COVID-19 vaccination

- To prevent morbidity and mortality.
- To achieve herd immunity and prevent ongoing transmission.

Six key considerations in the selection of Covid-19 vaccines for the South African setting.

- Safety, efficacy and immunogenicity (reactogenicity, short and long term safety and efficacy, population groups studied as well as humoral vs. cellular immunogenicity)
- Ease of use and schedule (including number of doses required)
- Stability during storage and distribution

- Supply and sustainability (i.e. supplier capacity)
- Cost
- SAHPRA approval (full licensure or emergency use authorisation)

Research Gaps

The evidence required to formulate more concrete recommendation are not available as yet. These include:

- Implementation science studies to assess: Accessing selected target populations; communication strategy to create demand, address vaccine safety perceptions and anti-vax messaging; sustaining NPIs after vaccine introduction.
- Local correlates of protection or risk.
- Durability of protection following vaccination and any requirement for booster doses.
- Vaccine protection against transmission and acquisition.
- Safety and immunogenicity of vaccination in COVID sero-positive individuals and individuals with HIV, TB, cancers, diabetes and other immune deficiency conditions.
- Safety in pregnant and lactating women and paediatric populations.
- Effect of pre-existing immunity to other alpha and beta Coronaviruses.
- Effect of viral drift / evolution on vaccine efficacy.

Recommendation

The Ministerial Advisory Committee on Vaccines recommends to the honourable Minister of Health the adoption of the criteria as a guide to select specific COVID-19 vaccines for introduction in South Africa.

Thank you for consideration of this request.

Kind regards,



PROFESSOR BARRY SCHOUB

CHAIRPERSON: MINISTERIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON COVID-19 VACCINES

DATE: 15 December 2020

CC:

- » **Dr S Buthelezi (Director-General)**
- » **Dr T Pillay (Deputy Director-General: Health Regulations and Compliance Management)**