



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

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BY EMAIL ONLY

Deputy Róisín Shortall

Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2
Email:

05/05/2021

PQ 19027-21 To ask the Minister for Health if he has considered any evidence in relation to those with a family history of severe clotting disorders and the risk of clotting disorders associated with the administration of a vaccine (details supplied); if a person with a family history of severe clotting disorders will be offered the choice of an alternative vaccine; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -

Dear Deputy Shortall

Thank you for your representation regarding the suitability of the Vaxzevria COVID-19 vaccine (also called the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine).

In April 2021, following reports of a small number of clotting events in patients who had recently received the Vaxzevria vaccine from multiple European countries (not including Ireland), the European Medicines Agency's (EMA) safety committee commenced an investigation to assess whether any link between these events and the vaccine could be shown. It's important to state at this point that the reported adverse events were a very particular presentation; a combination of clots in the blood supply for the brain or the gut and also a decrease in a type of blood cell called platelets and were extremely rare (between 4-10 cases per million people). The majority of these adverse events were seen in women aged under 60 and no specific risk factors for developing these side effects was shown.

Following their investigations, the EMA stated that while it was plausible that these events were caused by the Vaxzevria vaccine, they are extremely rare and the overall benefits of the Vaxzevria vaccine in preventing COVID-19 far outweighed the risk of side-effects. Taking these findings into account, the National Immunisation Advisory Committee in Ireland decided to limit the use of Vaxzevria vaccine to those aged 50 years and older. This is because we have evidence that persons aged over 50 have a much higher risk of severe outcomes (including ICU admission and death) from COVID-19 than of developing this extremely rare side effect. This evidence is even stronger in persons aged over 65.

The HSE sought advice from the National Coagulation Centre and they have advised that no previous history of clotting disorders, nor a history of heparin induced thrombocytopenia is a contraindication to receiving the Vaxzevria vaccine. The only contraindication to receiving Vaxzevria vaccine is an allergy to the vaccine or any of its constituents.

It is currently not possible to choose which COVID-19 vaccine to receive and it would be strongly advised that people would avail of the first vaccine that is offered which may be the Vaxzevria vaccine to protect them from COVID-19 disease as soon as possible.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sharon Hayden".

Sharon Hayden
General Manager
Office of the CCO