



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

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BY EMAIL ONLY

Deputy Jim O'Callaghan

Dáil Éireann
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

20 /07/2021

PQ 22670-21 – Deputy Jim O'Callaghan: To ask the Minister for Health when persons who do not wish to take a vaccine (details supplied) may be able to receive a different vaccine; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy O'Callaghan,

Thank you for your representation. Sincere apologies for the delay in responding to this representation, which is due to the cyber-attack on the HSE.

The HSE are rolling out the vaccine programme in line with the National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC). 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.

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 at that point in May. This is because of 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 advice from NIAC and the National Coagulation Centre is 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. We would strongly advise that people avail of the first vaccine that is offered to protect her from COVID-19 disease as soon as possible.

I hope this provides you with assistance.

Yours faithfully

Sharon Hayden
General Manager
Office of the CCO