

Dr Tony Holohan
CMO, DOH

24 May 2021

Re: COVID-19 vaccine related issues under consideration

Dear Tony,

At the National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) COVID-19 Vaccine Working Group weekly meeting on 24 May 2021, it was agreed that the following items would be brought to your attention as they may warrant future modifications of advice to the vaccination programme:

1. **Emerging surveillance data on Thrombosis with Thrombocytopenia Syndrome (TTS) following dose 2 Vaxzevria® and preliminary safety and efficacy of a heterologous vaccination schedule.** Although the rates of TTS after dose 2 seem less than after dose 1, there is emerging recognition that the reporting rate is higher than previously understood (15 cases in 9 million second doses in the UK [MHRA 20 May 2021](#)). There is now published evidence of the safety of heterologous vaccine schedules and reported evidence, as yet unpublished, as to the immunogenicity of such schedules. NIAC will review both these aspects to determine whether it is preferable to offer those aged under 50 an mRNA vaccine as their second dose.
2. **Interval between first and second dose Vaxzevria® in view of emerging B.1617.2 (Indian variant).** NIAC notes that the UK has reduced the interval between doses of Vaxzevria® and mRNA vaccines from 12 weeks to 8 weeks to provide earlier protection against this variant. NIAC notes that the interval between doses of mRNA vaccines in Ireland has not exceeded 4 weeks and will keep the issue of the interval between two doses of Vaxzevria® under review.
3. **Vaccination of children and adolescents.** While awaiting authorisation, NIAC notes that Comirnaty® has been authorised and recommended for use in those aged 12 and older in US and Canada. EMA authorisation is expected this week. NIAC is currently carrying out an evidence review for the question *What is the incidence and severity of SARS-CoV-2 infection in infants and children?* NIAC will be considering recommendations for children with high risk medical conditions, those living with immunocompromised persons as well as ethical issues of recommending the vaccine for healthy adolescents.

As always, NIAC keeps these and other items, such as vaccine impact on transmission, under rolling review.

Sincerely,

Karina Butler
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Karina Butler
Chair NIAC