New American

Written by **James Murphy** on April 17, 2021

Australian Authorities See "Likely" Link Between AstraZeneca Vaccine and Blood Clot Death

AP Images

The troubled COVID-19 vaccine from drug manufacturer AstraZeneca received more bad news on Friday. Australia's Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) reported that there is likely a link between the AstraZeneca vaccine and the death of a 48-year-old New South Wales woman from a blood clot.

"The TGA's Vaccine Safety Investigative Group (VSIG) met late today and concluded that a recently reported case of thrombosis (blood clots in the arteries and veins) is likely to be linked to vaccination," said a statement released Friday by the Australian Department of Public Health.

Since last month, AstraZeneca has been dogged by a possible link between its vaccine and a rare blood clot disorder. The same disorder has led to the death of at least 3 Europeans.

Earlier this week, Denmark became the first nation to announce a ban on the AstraZeneca vaccine, citing a "known risk of severe side effects" as the reason. At least three deaths in Europe have been anecdotally linked to the AstraZeneca vaccine.

The TGA said it was "carefully reviewing" the situation and has now said that the Pfizer vaccine would be given preference to the AstraZeneca vaccine in patients under 50 years of age. TGA reports at least two other cases of blood clotting which may be related to the vaccine but those patients are reportedly recovering well.

The Australian woman who died was said to have underlying health problems, including diabetes and other unnamed health issues. There were, reportedly other "atypical" clinical features associated with the woman's death but the VSIG panel concluded that "in the absence of an alternative cause for the clinical syndrome … a causative link to vaccination should be assumed at this time."

The number of reported instances of the blood clotting malady that killed the New South Wales woman is small. Out of approximately 885,000 AstraZeneca vaccines given in Australia, only the three cases have been reported thus far — a frequency of 1 in 295,000 doses. In the UK, however, that frequency shrinks to 1 in 250,000 cases according to their Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency.

Common side effects of the AstraZeneca vaccine include fever, sore muscles, tiredness and headache. The TGA encourages consumers who have received the vaccine to seek medical attention should they experience the following:

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A severe or persistent headache or blurred vision.
Shortness of breath, chest pain, leg swelling or persistent abdominal pain.
Unusual skin bruising and/or pinpoint round spots beyond the site of injection.
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So, it seems that, much like the coronavirus itself, the actual risk of dying from the immunization is small — only one in a quarter of a million cases if you believe the UK's regulatory agency. A small risk to be certain.

The AstraZeneca vaccine is, according to clinical trials done in the UK, Brazil and other South American countries, 76 percent effective, which rises to 82 percent after both doses have been received.

So it all comes down to risk assessment. Should a consumer risk getting a shot with a 1 in 250,000 chance that they will develop a serious and potentially fatal blood clotting disorder on a vaccine which offers only an 80 percent efficacy rate? In other words, should they risk getting the shot even though they'll still have a 1 in 5 chance of still getting COVID-19?

Ultimately, it's up to the consumer to decide whether to take this risk. Even if it's a slight risk, it's still a risk. And the reward promised is only a 4 out of 5 chance that the consumer won't get a virus that has (depending on the source) a 95-99 percent survival rate.