



Written by [James Murphy](#) on March 16, 2021

## More Countries Suspend AstraZeneca COVID Vaccine Over Blood-clotting Fears

Several more countries have suspended or delayed the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine developed by AstraZeneca over reports of serious blood clotting that may be associated with the drug. On Tuesday, Sweden and Latvia joined a host of other nations including Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Denmark, Norway, Ireland, and the Netherlands in halting immunization programs temporarily.

The German Health Ministry stressed that the pause on vaccinations is a “precaution” and was not an indictment of the vaccine. The Paul Ehrlich Institute (PEI) — Germany’s authority on vaccines — noted a “conspicuous accumulation” of coagulation disorders since vaccinations given last Thursday.

“The decision today is purely precautionary,” said German Health Minister Jens Spahn on Monday. “It is a purely technical and not a political decision. And that is why I’m following the recommendation of the Paul Ehrlich Institute.”

According to PEI, there have been at least seven cases of a very rare cerebral vein thrombosis together with a lack of blood platelets known as thrombocytopenia reported by patients after receiving doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine. At least three of those cases have proven fatal thus far.

“I think it’s justified to pause for a moment ... in order to discuss these findings in a European context and to compare them with the European data,” said PEI president Klaus Cichutek.

In France, President Emmanuel Macron echoed the chorus of vaccine supporters hoping that the pause on vaccinations was merely temporary. “The decision has been made ... to suspend the use of the AstraZeneca vaccine as precaution, hoping that we can resume it quickly if the judgment of the [European Medicines Agency] allows it,” The French leader said.

The European Medicines Agency (EMA), which is in charge of the evaluation and supervision of medicines in the European Union, is standing behind the AstraZeneca vaccine even as it investigates the evidence of the reported side-effects. Emer Cooke of Ireland, the executive director of the EMA, and also a member of WHO, said that the agency was conducting a “very rigorous analysis” of the evidence while maintaining that EMA is “firmly convinced” that the benefits of the vaccine far outweigh the possible side effects.

In an interview with [euronews](#), Cooke said that the number of blood-clotting episodes “seems not to be higher than that seen in the general population.”



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Specifically, the EMA is looking for evidence that some batches of the vaccine are bad, although multiple batches have been involved in the blood-clotting incidents, “therefore it’s unlikely that it’s batch specific,” according to Cooke.

“We’ve actually mobilized our biological working party to look carefully into the possibility or plausibility of any event linked to specific batches or in fact any differences in manufacturing in any way that might lead to some disparities across batches,” Cooke said.

After a “rigorous analysis,” the EMA is expected to offer its conclusions on Thursday. But with all of the cheerleading in support of the vaccine, is there any doubt as to what those conclusions will be?

Meanwhile, the WHO has declared that there is no reason for panic, with the head of the organization, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, claiming that there is no evidence of a link between the vaccine and the blood-clotting events that have been reported. Of course, that’s the same WHO that has echoed communist Chinese talking points since the virus was first discovered in Wuhan, China, in 2019.

WHO is meeting today to discuss the issue of the possible blood-clotting side effects associated with the AstraZeneca vaccine.

The AstraZeneca vaccine was developed by the British-Swedish multinational pharmaceutical company in cooperation with the University of Oxford. The vaccine initially used aborted fetuses to help the vaccine replicate, although AstraZeneca claims that those cells are removed in the manufacturing process.

Dr. Cooke and, presumably, her colleagues at the EMA and WHO, are “firmly convinced” that the benefits of receiving the AstraZeneca vaccine outweigh any risks that might be associated with it.

Maybe she’s right. But isn’t that the individual’s decision? Physicians and politicians and government agencies can give all the advice they want, whether it’s solicited or not. Ultimately, it needs to be up to the individual to weigh the options and decide whether or not to take that risk.



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