

# Dengue vaccine not deadly: Sanofi, Philippines

December 4 2017

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A world-first dengue vaccination programme in the Philippines that was suspended over safety concerns will not cause anyone who was immunised to die, drug manufacturer Sanofi and local authorities said on Monday.

The Philippines on Friday suspended the programme, after more than 733,000 people had been immunised, in response to a statement from Sanofi that its vaccine could cause "more cases of severe disease" for people who had not previously had the mosquito-borne ailment.

After news outlets and some politicians in the Philippines expressed concern about the welfare of those immunised, the French pharmaceutical giant held a press conference in Manila to state the potential cases of "severe [dengue](#)" would not be fatal.

"What is this severe (dengue)? When people think of 'severe', this already includes dengue shock that could lead to death, but no," Sanofi Pasteur regional head for dengue Joselito Sta. Ana told reporters.

Sta. Ana said Sanofi's definition of "severe dengue" merely referred to symptoms including two days of fever, a lower platelet count and bruising.

Philippine presidential spokesman Harry Roque also sought to allay fears, stating there was "no danger" with the Dengvaxia vaccine.

"The worst that can happen is for those who have not had dengue before—which is one out of 10 (Filipinos)—they may get infected with dengue but falling under our previous classification of 'mild', having fever and bruises," Roque said.

Nevertheless, the justice department announced Monday that the National Bureau of Investigation would investigate the vaccination programme "over the alleged danger to public health". It warned in a statement that charges could follow.

The previous administration of president Benigno Aquino launched the vaccination programme last year, making the Philippines the first nation to use Dengvaxia on a mass scale.

Although the Philippine programme has been suspended, Dengvaxia remains available on an individual basis in consultation with doctors, the health department said.

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