

China approves trials for two more coronavirus vaccines

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Scientists around the world are racing to develop a coronavirus vaccine

China has approved clinical trials for two more experimental vaccines to combat the novel coronavirus, officials said Tuesday, as the world's scientists race to beat the pandemic.

The vaccines use inactivated coronavirus pathogens, and the approvals pave the way for early-stage human [trials](#), Wu Yuanbin, an official from China's Ministry of Science and Technology told a regular press briefing.

China's state food and [drug administration](#) on Monday approved one [vaccine](#) developed by a Beijing-based unit of Nasdaq-listed Sinovac Biotech, Wu said.

Another vaccine, being developed by the Wuhan Institute of Biological Products and the Wuhan Institute of Virology, was approved on Sunday, he added.

China now has three different clinical trials for three possible coronavirus vaccines in the works.

Beijing approved the first trial for a vaccine developed by the military-backed Academy of Military Medical Sciences and Hong Kong-listed biotech firm CanSino Bio on March 16.

That day the US drug developer Moderna said it had begun human tests for their vaccine with the US National Institutes of Health.

"Vaccination of subjects during the first phase of clinical trials and the recruitment of volunteers for the second phase of clinical trials began on April 9," Wu said.

"It's the world's first novel coronavirus vaccine to initiate Phase II clinical studies."

There are currently no approved vaccines or medication for the COVID-19 disease, which has killed more than 120,000 people worldwide and infected nearly two million.

Chinese teams were also racing to develop vaccines using other methods including using attenuated influenza virus vectors or injecting specific nucleic acid.

Several of these projects are currently undergoing animal testing and quality inspections, Wu said.

"The vaccines using the above technical methods are expected to be submitted for [clinical trials](#) in April and May," he added.

Experts have raised hopes that a vaccine could be ready within 18 months.

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