UAE approves use of COVID-19 vaccine for health workers

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The United Arab Emirates has announced it approved the emergency use for healthcare workers of a coronavirus vaccine still in the final phase of human trials.

"The vaccine will be available to our first line of defense heroes who are at the highest risk of contracting the virus," tweeted the National Emergency Crisis and Disaster Management Authority (NCEMA) on Monday.

Chinese drug giant Sinopharm began the third phase of trials for a COVID-19 vaccine in the UAE in July, with Emirati officials saying the results have been positive.

"Clinical trials for the third phase are continuing under the strict supervision of medical teams, while following all measures to control the quality, safety and efficacy of the vaccine," said NCEMA.

"The results of clinical trials in our country are moving on the right path, with all tests being successful so far."

NCEMA said the vaccine has been tested on 31,000 volunteers and only "mild and expected" side effects have been reported, adding that 1,000 test subjects with chronic diseases showed "no complications".

The announcement on Monday came amid a spike in coronavirus cases in the UAE, whose daily toll hit an all-time high on Saturday when the country recorded 1,007 infections.

The Gulf state has confirmed more than 80,000 cases overall, including 401 deaths.

Sinopharm has said it hopes their vaccine will be approved as early as the end of the year.

It anticipates the antibodies from its vaccine could last between one and three years, although the final result will only be known after the trials.

There are currently nine vaccine candidates in late-stage human [trials](#) around the world, although some have hit recent obstacles—pharma giant AstraZeneca and Oxford University momentarily paused [clinical trials](#) last week after a volunteer developed an unexplained illness.

Meanwhile, Russia announced last month that its vaccine, named "Sputnik V" after the Soviet-era satellite that was the first launched into space in 1957, had already been approved.

This raised concerns among Western scientists over a lack of safety data, with some warning that moving too quickly on a vaccine could be dangerous.

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