

Belgium restricts AstraZeneca vaccine to over 55s

April 7 2021



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

Belgium on Wednesday announced it is restricting AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine to over 55s only, following a finding by the EU's drugs regulator of a link with rare forms of blood clots.

The suspension of the jab for adults aged 18 to 55 is based on "recent

scientific advice," the health ministry said in a statement, adding that people in that age bracket would be offered jabs from BioNTech/Pfizer or Moderna instead.

Unlike some other EU countries, Belgium had not previously restricted the use of AstraZeneca for adults, adhering to a recommendation from the European Medicines Agency, which finds its benefit outweighs the risks.

The statement said that the change in Belgium "will have little to no impact on the vaccination campaign under way, as [elderly people](#) are currently being vaccinated".

It said the decision, made in an interministerial meeting earlier Wednesday, will be reviewed in four weeks' time.

Explaining the decision, the [health ministry](#) said that the AstraZeneca vaccine "significantly reduces the risks of hospitalisation and death" in people aged 56 and over.

Under that age, the benefits of the AstraZeneca jab were still "large" but that alternative vaccines were increasingly available and offered a better benefit/risk ratio.

It estimated that, in Belgium, there was a theoretical risk of a rare blood clot after an AstraZeneca injection for 1.4 cases per 700,000 doses in the over-55 age range.

© 2021 AFP

Citation: Belgium restricts AstraZeneca vaccine to over 55s (2021, April 7) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-04-belgium-restricts-astrazeneca-vaccine-55s.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.