

China's Coronavac 80% effective at preventing COVID deaths: Chile results

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China's Coronavac vaccine was 67 percent effective at preventing symptomatic COVID-19 and 80 percent at preventing death, according to real-life results unveiled Friday from Chile's inoculation campaign.

"These figures should convey peace of mind to the country," Health Minister Enrique Paris told journalists as he announced the outcome of two months' of vaccination in Chile, in February and March.

The results were obtained from a comparison between people who were fully vaccinated, partly vaccinated with one dose, and non-vaccinated—a sample size of some 10.5 million in total—in the country that has led the pack with its vaccine rollout.

They also showed the vaccine was 85 percent effective at preventing hospitalization with serious coronavirus symptoms, and 89 percent at preventing intensive care admissions.

Chile's government wants to inoculate 80 percent or 15.2 million of its population. It is far ahead in Latin America, and has one of the most advanced vaccine campaigns in the world.

As of Friday, the country had succeeded in giving at least one vaccine dose to 7.6 million people, and both doses to more than five million—about a third of the target population.

It kicked off its campaign on Christmas Eve last year with medical personnel, followed by the wider population from February, starting with older citizens.

Coronavac, produced by Chinese firm Sinovac, made up 86.9 percent of Chile's vaccine arsenal, with the remainder receiving the Pfizer/BioNtech jab.

Most of those who got it in February and March were over 60 years old—the category of people most vulnerable to serious symptoms.

The results were unveiled as Chile, as much of South America, recorded

a marked uptick in infections. It reported a record number of confirmed new cases of more than 9,000 in one day.

Most of Chile's population was placed under lockdown at the end of last month.

Trial results with Coronavac in Brazil had shown efficiency of about 50 percent in preventing symptomatic infection.

The Chile results come from one of the first studies in real-life conditions.

Coronavac is a traditional type of vaccine, using inactivated coronavirus to trigger immunity.

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