

A third of healthcare workers took sick leave after COVID vaccination, German study finds

April 23 2022



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

A third of healthcare workers took sick leave after being vaccinated against COVID-19, a German study presented at this year's European

Congress of Clinical Microbiology & Infectious Diseases (ECCMID) in Lisbon, Portugal, (23-26 April) has found.

A healthy healthcare workforce is vital to cope with COVID-19, as well as with the pandemic's wider effects on public health. As a result, many countries have prioritized the vaccination of [healthcare workers](#).

Little information is available, however, on the incidence of [side-effects](#) in healthcare workers. This is important because, if it leads to them taking time off, it could put already under-pressure healthcare systems under extra strain.

To find out more, Julia Reusch, of the University Hospital Würzburg, Würzburg, Germany and her colleagues Isabell Wagenhäuser, Dr. Alexander Gabel, Dr. Manuel Krone and Dr. Nils Petri evaluated healthcare workers given at least one dose of the four following COVID-19 vaccines: BioNTech/Pfizer (Comirnaty), Moderna (Spikevax), Oxford/AstraZeneca (VaxZevria) and Janssen.

An electronic questionnaire was used to gather information about sick leave and side effects from the 1,797 healthcare workers (aged 18-plus) in the study. Side-effects included in the questionnaire included local vaccination reactions (swelling, redness or pain around injection site), headaches, aching limbs, fever and/or chills and fatigue.

588 healthcare workers (32.72%) took sick leave overall, amounting to 1,777 [sick days](#). Average length of sick leave was two days.

Workers were most likely to take sick leave after the third dose of the [vaccine](#). While only 5.65% of the participants took a sick leave after their first administration (mostly after receiving a vector vaccine), 20.66% took a sick leave after the second dose and 27.31% after the third one. Median length of sick leave was 2 days and lasted up to 47

days.

Most of the 5.65% of the participants took sick leave after their first dose of the vaccine. Most of these had been given the viral vector vaccines (Oxford/AstraZeneca and Janssen).

(Changes to the vaccine regimen in Germany meant that not enough healthcare workers had second or third doses of vector vaccines for the information to be included in the study.)

Those given the mRNA jabs (BioNTech/Pfizer and Moderna) were most likely to take sick leave after their second or third dose.

Sick leave after the third dose was significantly longer after the Moderna vaccine than the BioNTech/Pfizer vaccine.

The relative number of self-reported side effects decreased from first to second to third vaccination.

There were significant differences in the number of side effects reported by those who received the BioNTech/Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. Significantly higher rates of side effects were reported after the second and third dose of the BioNTech/Pfizer vaccine compared to the Moderna vaccine.

Ms Reusch says: "A considerable number of healthcare workers took sick days after vaccination. The timing of the side effects varied according to the vaccine used. Those given viral vector vaccines were most likely to take sick leave after their first dose and there were higher rates of [sick leave](#) after the third dose of the Moderna vaccine than the BioNTech vaccine.

"The number of [side effects](#) and consequent time off after COVID-19

vaccination of [healthcare](#) workers is not negligible and should be further investigated."

The participants were members of the CoVacSer study, which is examining the course of COVID-19 antibodies, quality of life and ability to work over time.

Provided by European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases

Citation: A third of healthcare workers took sick leave after COVID vaccination, German study finds (2022, April 23) retrieved 26 June 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2022-04-healthcare-workers-sick-covid-vaccination.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.