

# In Paris, monkeypox vaccination gains steam with volunteer help

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Doctor Kevin Huy was vaccinating people in Paris against COVID-19 when he answered a call for volunteers to inoculate against a more recent global outbreak—monkeypox.

Now he is putting jabs in arms at Checkpoint Paris, a sexual health centre in the heart of the French capital dedicated to LGBT people.

Despite a shortage of people to administer shots, the [vaccination campaign](#) is gaining momentum in the Paris region, which has been the epicentre of France's outbreak.

France has the fifth-highest number of [monkeypox](#) cases worldwide—nearly 2,000, the national health authorities said on Friday.

More than 95 percent of French monkeypox cases have been in men who have sex with men, a group that has been overwhelmingly affected the virus.

Before May, the virus was largely only seen in West and Central Africa.

But more than 18,000 monkeypox cases have been detected throughout the world outside Africa since, most of them in Europe, according to the World Health Organization.

On Monday, India reported the fourth death linked to the virus outside Africa. France's neighbour Spain recorded two deaths over the weekend.

The rising cases have piled pressure on authorities to roll out doses of a smallpox vaccine that has been found to protect against monkeypox.

## **'Hit hard by COVID'**

Amelie Verdier, the head of the Paris regional health agency, told AFP that 25 new monkeypox vaccination centres had opened in the region including the capital since July 8—including 18 in the city itself.

More than 8,000 injections had been administered in the region as of

Friday, representing 70 percent of all vaccinations in France. Around 5,000 of those injections were carried out just last week.

While admitting that early [logistical problems](#) may have delayed the initial rollout, Verdier emphasised that there was now no problem in acquiring doses.

The issue has become finding people to put jabs in arms.

"Health professionals have been very hard hit by the COVID crisis," she said.

Last week the French government said it would mobilise more people to help with vaccinations, including health students.

A lack of staff has meant Checkpoint Paris has not been able to meet the demand for monkeypox inoculations.

"We were able to bring in temporary doctors but it is more difficult to recruit nurses," said the centre's head, Sebastien Denglos.

Huy, a GP from the northern suburbs of Paris, was one of those doctors.

"I was already vaccinating against COVID in the 20th district of Paris, when I saw in a WhatsApp group that more people were needed for monkeypox," he said.

The help was welcomed at the centre, which also fears it will struggle to administer the necessary second dose in time due to staffing shortages.

However French [health](#) authorities have indicated that the 28-day time limit between the first and second doses may be extended.

Another timeline is almost up—the great August evacuation from Paris for summer holidays.

Arnaud, 22, went to Checkpoint Paris on Thursday to make an appointment for a jab the following day.

"I didn't want to stay isolated at home and spoil the little holiday I have," he said.

Once he is vaccinated, he hopes "to be able to spend a summer in relative peace".

The WHO has emphasised that vaccination will not give instant protection against monkeypox infection. That can take weeks.

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