Egypt says it has launched vaccinations against coronavirus

24 January 2021, by Samy Magdy

Credit: CC0 Public Domain

Egypt on Sunday launched a vaccination campaign against the coronavirus, with the first shots of Chinese state-owned pharmaceutical giant Sinopharm's vaccine given to healthcare workers in the Suez Canal city of Ismailia.

Health Minister Hala Zayed told a televised news conference that they would prioritize vaccinating healthcare workers in 40 hospitals that are designated to isolate and treat COVID-19 patients across the country.

Next, they would vaccinate elders and those suffer from chronic diseases, Zayed said. She did not offer a timeframe for vaccinating the whole population.

Zayed said people would receive two doses of the vaccine over 21 days. The Chinese-made vaccine is 86% effective, she added.

Sinopharm's shot relies on a tested technology, using a dead virus to deliver the vaccine, similar to polio immunizations.

The vaccine is believed to be able to travel at a

temperature of 2 to 8 degrees Celsius (35 to 46 degrees Fahrenheit), a major draw for areas of the world where nearly 3 billion people live without stable electricity and refrigeration.

Egypt has also negotiated for two other vaccines—one from Oxford University and AstraZeneca, and another from Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech.

Finance Minister Mohamed Maait said last month that the government has contracted to purchase 20 million doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine and 30 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine.

Egypt, the Arab world's most populous country with over 100 million people, has reported more than 161,140 confirmed cases, including 8,902 deaths. However, the actual numbers of COVID-19 cases, like elsewhere in the world, are thought to be far higher, in part due to limited testing.

APA citation: Egypt says it has launched vaccinations against coronavirus (2021, January 24) retrieved 13 April 2021 from https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-01-egypt-covid-vaccination-campaign-sisi.html