Medical Xpress

Italian tries to dodge Covid jab using fake arm

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An Italian man who wanted a coronavirus vaccine certificate without actually having the jab tried to play the system by presenting health workers with a fake arm, an official said Friday.

Despite the realistic skin colour, nobody was fooled by the silicone limb, and the man—in his 50s—was reported to local police following the incident on Thursday night in Biella, northwest Italy.

"The case borders on the ridiculous, if it were not for the fact we are talking about a gesture of enormous gravity," the head of the Piedmont regional government, Albert Cirio, said in a statement on Facebook.

He said such an act was "unacceptable faced with the sacrifice that our entire community has paid during the pandemic, in terms of human lives, the social and economic cost."

The fake arm incident comes ahead of a tightening of the rules Monday in Italy for people who have not yet been vaccinated against COVID-19.

Since August, a "Green Pass" showing proof of vaccination, recent recovery from coronavirus or a negative test has been required for indoor dining in restaurants, to visit museums, cinemas, theatres and attend sporting events.

But from December 6, these activities will be restricted to holders of a "Super Green Pass", which is only available to those who have been

vaccinated or recently had COVID-19.

The old Green Pass was extended in October to cover all workplaces, and remains valid for this purpose, meaning the unvaccinated can still go to work by showing a recent negative test.

The new restrictions—the subject of small protests in city centres across Italy on most weekends—were introduced following an increase in COVID-19 cases, exacerbated in recent days by fears over the new variant Omicron.

Italy was the first European country to be hit by the pandemic in early 2020, but is currently faring better than many of its neighbours.

On Thursday, 16,800 new cases were reported in the previous 24 hours, with 72 deaths.

Almost 85 percent of the eligible population (aged over 12) are already fully vaccinated, and this week the option of a booster dose was extended to all adults.

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