MINUTES: COVID-19 Vaccine Technical Advisory Group

Date:	Tuesday 17 August 2021
Time:	11:00am to 12:00pm
Location:	Teams: 9(2)(k)
Chair:	Ian Town
Members:	Elizabeth Wilson, Helen Petousis-Harris, James Ussher, Nikki Moreland, Nikki Turner, Peter McIntyre, Sean Hanna, Sue Crengle, Tony Walls
Ministry of Health Attendees:	Andi Shirtcliffe, Brooke Hollingshead, Daniel Bernal, Edwin Reynolds, Fiona Callaghan, Juliet Rumball-Smith, Niki Stefanogiannis, Shayma Faircloth, Pippa Scott
Guests:	Christian Marchello, John Tait, Kris Golding, Rachel Eyre, Tia Narvaez
Apologies:	Caroline McElnay, David Murdoch, Ian Frazer

1.0	**Welcome and previous minutes** Ian Town welcomed all Members and Attendees in his capacity as Chair of the COVID-19 Vaccine Technical Advisory Group (CV TAG). Mr John Tait, Chair of the Vaccine ISMB was welcomed. Minutes of the last meeting (03 August 2021) were accepted.
2.0	**Science Updates** Updates on the COVID-19 vaccines were highlighted: • There are reports that the US intends to grant full approval of Pfizer in early September. • The US Food and Drug Administration have amended their emergency use authorisations for Pfizer and Moderna to allow for the use of a third dose in certain immunocompromised people, specifically, solid organ transplant recipients or those who are diagnosed with conditions that are considered to have an equivalent level of immunocompromise. • Pfizer have released preliminary data on third doses in adults showing increased neutralising antibody titres. • More data on the safety of vaccination among pregnant women has been released.
3.0	**Research in children** Updates on COVID-19 vaccine research among children were highlighted: • CV TAG requested information on whether any post-marketing larger summaries have been released relating to children. Some initial data from the CDC were shared, and this will be included in future updates.
4.0	**Vaccine Rollout Update**

	The daily vaccine report was presented to CV TAG. The rollout is proceeding at pace and ramping up to deliver 50,000+ doses per day. Supplies are now steady. The 2020 Health Service Utilisation is being used as the population denominator in order to monitor vaccination data by ethnicity.
5.0	**Dosing Interval for Pfizer** The Chair shared that the extension of the interval between doses was accepted by the Director-General and announced by the Prime Minister last week and was framed as providing greater population protection. The changes to the booking website have been implemented and this has freed up appointments for more first doses around New Zealand.
6.0	**Myocarditis after Pfizer Vaccination** An update on myocarditis cases was provided by the Chair: • The risk management communication relating to myocarditis was addressed with the announcement of the dosing interval extension. It was requested that references to increasing dosing intervals potentially providing some protection against myocarditis be removed from communications. This has been actioned. • An amendment to CV TAG's recommendations on myocarditis after Pfizer COVID-19 vaccination is needed to confirm that those "under clinical review by a cardiologist who should discuss the risk and benefits of vaccination" applies for 12- to 29-year-olds (and not 16- to 29-year-olds) once the extended age range has been approved and announced.
7.0	**Decision to Use Pfizer 12- to 15-year-olds** • CV TAG's recommendation that vaccination of 12- to 15-year-olds proceeds has been relayed to the Director-General and Vaccine Ministers. • Advice on promoting vaccination in whānau groups has been incorporated. • CV TAG requested the benefits of personal and family protection should be emphasised, rather than indirect benefits such as population protection. • The importance of vaccinating vulnerable groups among 12- to 15-year-olds was raised and discussed. It was noted that 12- to 15-year-olds considered Group 3 will be prioritised through another pathway and given codes to book.
8.0	**MMR/Influenza Coadministration** A draft memo reviewing evidence on coadministration of the COVID-19 vaccine with other vaccines (e.g. MMR/Influenza/HPV) was shared with CV TAG for discussion. • CV TAG discussed the immunisation programme in the context of concern about RSV outbreaks and impact on staffing, lagging vaccination rates for MMR and HPV, and knowledge of the prior impact of measles outbreaks on Māori and Pasifika. • CV TAG encouraged that all intervals between COVID-19 vaccines and other vaccines (with the exception below) be removed, and same-day coadministration be allowed. Such intervals were seen as a barrier to uptake of both the COVID-19 vaccine and other vaccinations. • An exception to same-day coadministration should be made for the live-attenuated shingles vaccine (Zostavax), where a 7-day interval is still required. • It was noted that younger people produce a good immune response to the COVID-19 vaccine and therefore even if this immune response is reduced by coadministration, it would still likely provide excellent protection. • The science on coadministration will continue to be monitored by the Science and Technical Advisory team.

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- The advice memo will be updated to reflect this messaging and shared with CVIP.

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Other COVID-19 Vaccines that New Zealand Could Recognise for Border Workers

- The Ministry's Policy team have requested CV TAG's advice on which other vaccines (in addition to Pfizer) should be recognised among border workers, and how to approach incomplete vaccinations among border workers.
- Medsafe has advised that the Ministry should adopt vaccines provisionally approved or authorised through emergency use provisions by:
    1. Medsafe themselves and
    2. Regulators in countries with similar regulatory systems to New Zealand, including the Australian Therapeutic Goods Administration, the US Food and Drug Administration, Health Products and Food Branch of Health Canada, United Kingdom Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, and the European Medicines Agency.
- The current advice is that if someone is partially vaccinated and only has a single-dose of a two-dose course regimen from overseas, they should have a dose of Pfizer after at least four weeks. It was noted that there should be no upper limit on when the second dose can be administered, and courses did not have to be repeated if there had been a long interval. They also advised against the use of serology/antibody testing to check protection.
- CV TAG noted that any guidance to border workers could potentially apply more generally to all overseas arrivals.
- Sinopharm and Sinovac vaccines were discussed, with mention of recipients of these possibly needing a booster dose of Pfizer to provide sufficient protection. However, it was noted that a complete review of the evidence on protection offered by other vaccines and incomplete vaccination schedules is needed to inform the discussion.
- The Science and Technical Advisory team will conduct a review of the evidence and share this with CV TAG for discussion at a future meeting.

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Next Steps/Decisions Pending

None.

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Any Other Business

None.

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Agenda items for next meeting

None.

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New Action Items Raised During Meeting

#	Agenda item	Actions	Action Owner	Updates
34	Myocarditis after Pfizer Vaccination	Compile information on cardiac-related events associated with other vaccines in New Zealand's portfolio.	Secretariat	13/07 - Action raised 27/07 - Drafted. Awaiting peer review

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	45	Myocarditis after Pfizer Vaccination	Update memo to reflect age-band from evidence review	Secretariat	17/08 - Action raised
	46	MMR/Influenza Coadministration	Update memo and circulate to CV TAG and CVIP	STA	17/08 - Action raised
	47	Other COVID-19 Vaccines that New Zealand Could Recognise	Compile evidence on protection offered by other vaccines and partial vaccination	STA	17/08 - Action raised

Meeting closed at **11:59 am**

Next meeting: **Tuesday 31 August – 11:00am to 12:00pm**

Open Actions:

#	Agenda item	Actions	Action Owner	Updates
34	Myocarditis after Pfizer Vaccination	Compile information on cardiac-related events associated with other vaccines in New Zealand's portfolio.	Secretariat	13/07 - Action raised 27/07 - Drafted. Awaiting peer review
45	Myocarditis after Pfizer Vaccination	Update memo to reflect age-band from evidence review	Secretariat	17/08 - Action raised
46	MMR/Influenza Coadministration	Update memo and circulate to CV TAG and CVIP	STA	17/08 - Action raised
47	Other COVID-19 Vaccines that New Zealand Could Recognise	Compile evidence on protection offered by other vaccines and partial vaccination	STA	17/08 - Action raised

Closed Actions Since Last Meeting:

#	Agenda item	Actions	Action Owner	Updates
39	Myocarditis after Pfizer Vaccination	Share draft messaging and timelines with CV TAG when available	Secretariat	27/07 - Action raised
40	Decision to Use Pfizer 12 to 15-year-olds and	Update memo and RfA and circulate	Chair and Secretariat	03/08 - Action raised 06/08 - Action closed

	Children Priority Groups			
41	Dosing interval	RfA shared with Director-General	Secretariat	03/08 - Action raised 03/08 - Action closed
42	Future Vaccine Portfolio	Update RfA and share with Policy	Secretariat	03/08 - Action raised 06/08 - Action closed
43	MMR/Influenza Coadministration	Update RfA with clinical trial data	Secretariat	03/08 - Action raised 03/08 - Action closed
44	MMR/Influenza Coadministration	Convene working group to draft recommendations	Secretariat	03/08 - Action raised 10/08 - Action closed