

DH receives one report of serious adverse event relating to COVID-19 vaccination

The Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 4pm today (March 29), one death case, reported as a suspected serious adverse event following COVID-19 vaccination, had been received from the Hospital Authority (HA) in the past 24 hours.

According to the information provided by the HA, the case involved a 61-year-old man who was a chronic smoker. He attended the Accident and Emergency Department of Alice Ho Miu Ling Nethersole Hospital on March 27 due to chest pain and left shoulder pain. He was subsequently admitted to the intensive care unit and suddenly developed ventricular tachycardia and cardiac arrest. He did not respond to resuscitation and passed away yesterday afternoon (March 28). The provisional cause of death is acute myocardial infarction. According to information, he received his first dose of CoronaVac COVID-19 vaccination at Yuen Wo Road Sports Centre Community Vaccination Centre in Sha Tin 12 days (March 16) prior to the date of death and there was no record that the man complained of feeling unwell during observation at the Vaccination Centre.

The DH immediately contacted the HA upon notification to obtain further information on the incident for conducting investigation and assessment. According to the established mechanism, the DH will provide the case to the Expert Committee on Clinical Events Assessment Following COVID-19 Immunisation for conducting causality assessment.

According to the World Health Organization, Adverse Events Following Immunisation refers to any untoward medical occurrence that follows immunisation and that does not necessarily have a causal relationship with the usage of the vaccine. As a whole population, people with acute medical conditions of various severities are admitted to hospitals every day. With the commencement of the vaccination programme, it is anticipated that more patients with acute medical conditions will have received vaccines and reports of such cases might increase with the increasing vaccination uptake. It is important for the surveillance system in place to monitor these adverse events following COVID-19 vaccination and to conduct causality assessment based on a scientific and objective approach to ensure that any untoward outcome would not go unnoticed.

According to the mortality rates in Hong Kong, there were 3 740 deaths due to ischaemic heart diseases, including acute myocardial infarction, in 2019. In addition, according to the information of the HA, in 2020 the number of hospital admissions due to myocardial infarction was about 7 300 cases. People with chronic illness should seek medical attention if they feel unwell. They should also adhere to their treatment as prescribed by their

doctors.