

Kathleen Logan

From: Emma Best <e.best@auckland.ac.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, 6 July 2021 11:26 AM
To: Kathleen Logan; Peter McIntyre
Subject: RE: are children more vulnerable to Covid vaccine side-effects?

Thanks for the email - I am not sure of the exact question but if the person is asking about side effects and the mRNA vaccine (COVID vaccine being used in NZ. I am unsure what the Q exactly is - side effects are more common in younger people and children however children are not 'more vulnerable' to side effects - ie these effects are expected and self resolving

The common side effects of the mRNA COVID vaccine used in NZ are arm pain, fever, fatigue, and body aches/chills.

These common side effects last 1-2 days after the vaccine. These are more common in younger people 55 yrs)

This vaccine is now licensed for use in the US and other countries for use in children aged 12-15 yrs - the safety and effectiveness information is from a large trial on this age group (details below). It is not an experimental vaccine and this vaccine had been used in millions of people before and along with being used in a trial involving children and now being more widely used in age groups aged 12 years and above overseas.

Vaccinations in children are not experimental and have been done with all of our vaccines which continue to be commonly used in our schedule every day (influenza, meningitis and whooping cough vaccines).

In NZ Medsafe has preliminarily also approved this COVID vaccine for this age group 12-15 yrs based on evaluating the safety and efficacy information.

Detail

The large randomized trial which led vaccine for 12-15 yrs being approved for broader use in the United States (early May 2021) had approx. 2,200 children/young people aged 12-15 years receiving either vaccine or saline (salt water). They were followed up at least 2 months after vaccine (although that would be longer now).

The short term minor side effects after the vaccine were common (arm pain, redness on arm) seen in 90%.

The generalised or systemic side effects (fever, fatigue, headache, chills) were also common but at about the same rates as for people aged 18-55 yrs. The general effects were more common after the second dose than first dose

Side effects occur within 1-4 days after vaccine and resolving within median of 1-2 days.

In children the severe local/systemic side effects (defined as interfering with daily activity) were in about 10% reported - the most common symptoms were fatigue (3.5%), fever (3.0%), headache (2.7%), chills (2.1%), and injection-site pain (1.5%). only one person had a symptoms that meant they needed to see a Dr (fever >40)

There were no serious adverse events considered to be related to vaccination. No specific safety concerns were seen

Thanks
Emma Best

Emma Best
Senior Lecturer, Department of Paediatrics: child and Youth Health
Medical Advisor to Immunisation Advisory Centre (IMAC)
The University of Auckland
Paediatric Infectious Diseases consultant, Starship
Auckland District Health Board

From: Kathleen Logan
Sent: Monday, 5 July 2021 9:54 am
To: Peter McIntyre
Cc: Emma Best
Subject: are children more vulnerable to Covid vaccine side-effects?

Morena Peter (if I may)

I have a question: **Are children more vulnerable to the side effects of the Covid19 vaccine?** If there is no evidence of that, I can say so in my response to a writer:

We have received a letter asking that the Children's Commissioner oppose children's participation in Covid19 vaccines due to them still being 'experimental' and keeping children (who can't consent to research participation) out of it. I disagree to the latter, and our position on vaccines is to follow the official advice of the Director General of Health (and the government, which is to quash any anti-vaccine rhetoric).

Sorry to keep bothering you, but we appreciate your expertise. I would like to reply to her by the 12th July, if you can get back to me before then. Thank you very much.

Ngā mihi nui

Dr Kathleen Logan

Senior Advisor, Strategy Rights & Advice
Te Tari o te Kaikomihana mō ngā Tamariki
Office of the Children's Commissioner www.occ.org.nz

P: s 9(2)(a) OIA



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