

Johnson booster 85% effective against Omicron: S.Africa study

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A booster of US coronavirus vaccine Johnson & Johnson was 85 percent effective in preventing serious illness in areas where Omicron was dominant, a South African trial study indicated Thursday.

The South African Medical Research Council conducted the study on [health workers](#) from November 15 to December 20, but it has still not been peer-reviewed.

It found the top-up jab to largely protect staff in a country where the highly transmissible strain is now behind most Covid cases.

"Data from the... study confirm that the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 booster shot provides 85 percent effectiveness against hospitalization in areas where Omicron is dominant," Johnson & Johnson said.

"This adds to our growing body of evidence which shows that the effectiveness of the Johnson & Johnson Covid-19 vaccine remains strong and stable over time, including against circulating variants such as Omicron and Delta," it said.

Around half a million South African health staff have received Johnson jabs as part of clinical trials.

Africa's hardest-hit country, South Africa has recorded more than 3.4 million cases and 90,000 deaths since the start of the pandemic.

An earlier South African study in December found the Pfizer/BioNTech [vaccine](#) to be less effective overall against Omicron, but still prevented hospital admissions by up to 70 percent.

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