

Iceland holds off on AstraZeneca vaccine

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Iceland's health authorities said Monday they would investigate AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine further before using it again even though the European regulator has declared it "safe and effective".

"All of the Nordic countries, including Iceland, have ... decided to investigate the matter further and to cooperate together before proceeding" with vaccinations using the AstraZeneca jab, Iceland's director of health Alma Moller said.

The country halted its use of the vaccine on March 11—the same day as Norway and Denmark—amid reports of post-jab side effects, notably a combination of blood clots, haemorrhaging and low blood platelet levels that was rare but occasionally fatal.

"Going forward, we will try to evaluate if the risk varies depending for example on age or gender, and this will form the basis for future use" of the vaccine, Moller said.

Iceland's decision was taken pending a Nordic review of side effects from all of the COVID-19 vaccines, not just AstraZeneca's, she said.

The European Medicines Agency, the EU's drugs

regulator, last week said the vaccine made by the Anglo-Swedish drugmaker was "safe and effective" and not linked to a higher risk of blood clots, recommending that vaccinations resume.

Numerous European countries subsequently lifted their suspensions.

The EMA said however that it was not able to definitively exclude a link between the jab and the rare yet severe coagulation disorders.

Norway, Sweden and Denmark said last week that despite the EMA ruling that they would await the outcome of further evaluations before resuming use of the jab again.

Finland also suspended use of the drug last Friday as a precaution after two cases of cerebral thrombosis were reported.

Iceland, where almost 38,000 people have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, has reported several cases of post-jab [blood](#) clots: two with the AstraZeneca [vaccine](#), and one each after the Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna jabs, authorities said.

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