

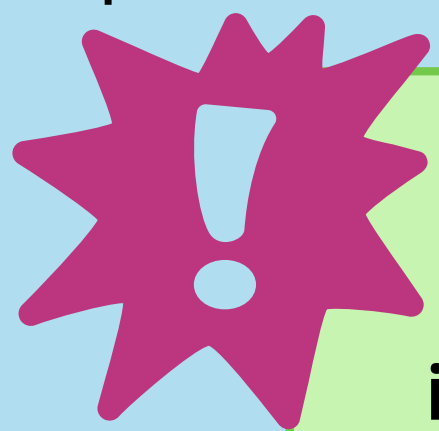
COVID-19: A FOCUS ON RARE DISEASES

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, people living with a **rare disease** are facing several difficulties in getting the needed treatments including lifesaving care, besides a higher risk of **COVID-19 complications**.

What about COVID-19 vaccines and rare diseases?

Ensuring patients with rare diseases the access to COVID-19 **vaccines**, should be widely considered as a **priority**.

Patients affected by specific conditions (e.g. cancers, rare diseases like severe combined immunodeficiency, cystic fibrosis, hemoglobinopathies and people on immunosuppression therapies) are included in priority groups within the national COVID-19 immunisation programmes [1,2].



Particular attention should be paid to different rare disease patients as they often suffer from comorbidities or take immunosuppressive therapies that might impair the vaccines action and response

[1] Public Health England. Green book - Chapter 14a - COVID-19 - SARS-CoV-2

[2] Italian Ministry of Health. Recommendations for target groups for COVID-19 vaccination

3 COVID-19 vaccines* have been authorised in Europe until now. The **European Medicines Agency** has assessed all the relevant evidence on the candidate vaccines and provided its positive opinion for a conditional marketing authorisation.

However, data on rare diseases patients, including those receiving immunosuppressive therapy have not been specifically mentioned in the vaccines documentation.

*Comirnaty®, COVID-19 Vaccine Moderna and COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca

What does the regulatory agency say?

A lot of doubts and questions remain about COVID-19 vaccines for these vulnerable populations. These patients need more detailed information about the vaccines effects on their rare conditions



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What is needed?

More than 6000
rare diseases
have been
reported in
Europe



Additional and reliable **evidence** on the effects of the COVID-19 vaccines and treatments on rare disease patients should be gathered by the pharmaceutical companies through clinical trials and observational studies targeted for them



Specific **guidelines** and **recommendations** should be developed by the rare disease scientific community according to the relevant differences among all rare diseases

To address rare disease patients concerns and to guide the COVID-19 vaccines administration, some of the scientific societies and associations for rare diseases have already released guiding documents and FAQ sections for patients and healthcare professionals.

What is already available?

Some useful resources:

- British Society for Immunology. Statement on COVID-19 vaccines for patients who are immunocompromised or immunosuppressed (January 2021)
- Public Health England. Green book - Chapter 14a - COVID-19 - SARS-CoV-2 (February 2021)
- International League Against Epilepsy. COVID-19 vaccines and people with epilepsy (February 2020)
- Lupus UK. Lupus and COVID-19 Vaccination (February 2021)
- European Reference Networks. Summary of the view of all ERNs on priorities and contra-indications for COVID-19 vaccinations (February 2021)
- Thalassaemia International Federation. COVID-19 Vaccines and Haemoglobin Disorders (December 2020)
- European Society for Medical Oncology. COVID-19 vaccination in cancer patients: ESMO statements (December 2020)
- WFH, EAHAD, EHC and NHF. COVID-19 vaccination guidance for people with bleeding disorders (December 2020)

Visit our [website](#) to consult all the available resources



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