Journal of Pharmacovigilance and Drug Research

April-June 2021
JPADR, 2021; 2(2): 1-2.
DOI: 10.53411/jpadr.2021.2.2.1



EDITORIAL ARTICLE

Journal home page: www.jpadr.com

Story of the biggest vaccination drive in the world so far

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ARTICLE INFO

Received 04 March 2021;
Revised 20 April 2021;
Accepted 21 May 2021.

OPEN ACCESS

An official publication of Global Pharmacovigilance Society

India is called the 'Vaccine Manufacturer of the World', as it produces approx. 60 % of the world's vaccines. UNICEF depends heavily on economically produced vaccines in India for its global health programs, especially in low-income countries (Ranade Ajit, 2021). The reasons which enabled India to become the manufacturing might have been fairly simple: low cost of conducting clinical trials, low cost of production, preference of earning from large scale usage rather than profit on each unit, and most importantly a big talent pool available at fraction of cost of Western World. Hence India became the global leader of generic drugs and vaccines.

When the devil of Coronavirus started spreading its dark shadow on the world in the form of COVID-19, the race to bring about the vaccine which could prevent it, started and most scientifically advanced nations jumped into the fray. India started looking for all-around solutions. One of its biggest vaccine producers – Serum Institute of India, betted on Oxford – AstraZeneca's Chimpanzee Adenovirus vector technology (Covishield) and initiated manufacturing and stockpiling vaccines. Another one – Bharat Biotech, in collaboration with ICMR, NIV worked out an indigenous vaccine based on inactivated SARS-CoV-2 Virus (Covaxin) (SII, 2021; Bharat Biotech, 2021).

With the dawn of New Year 2021, both vaccines received Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) by DCGI. Subsequently, India began the auspicious and world's biggest vaccination drive in a phase-wise manner on 16th Jan 2021, starting with its healthcare workers, followed by other frontline workers. Within a week into the immunization program, India booked its place in the top 10 countries, thanks to the tireless efforts of its Healthcare Workers (Rai D, 2021). It did not stop at that and became the fastest in the world to reach the mark of 100 million COVID vaccine shots (MoHFW, 2021).

India committed to WHO and started supplying Covishield and Covaxin for the COVAX scheme aiming to deliver more than 2 billion doses to people in 190 countries, following the ideology of health and happiness for all, when developed countries like the US & UK declined sharing their vaccines with other countries (BBC, 2021).

As KARMA would have it, during the April vaccine crisis and medicines/oxygen shortage, most nations stood in solidarity with India, trying their level best to help the country.

India will get back on its step, will scale up its vaccine production, along with other local players, might even allow the global players and continue balancing nationalism while helping others be healthy and happy.

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Available online 1 June 2021

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