

As Hungary Trials All Major Covid-19 Vaccines – Russia’s Sputnik V Most Safe

Description

Hungary is one of the few countries using all the main Covid-19 vaccines. A study conducted by Budapest, based on the number of people who've been vaccinated and then been infected or died, shows good news for Russia's Sputnik V

The statistics, showing how many recipients were infected with Covid-19 or died from the virus following vaccination, were released on Sunday by Viktor Orban's administration. It came as a response to the criticism surrounding the vaccination campaign, which the Orban government has labeled an "anti-vaccination" effort by leftist opponents.

Notably, the data suggested that Sputnik V has so far had the safest record of all the Covid-19 vaccines used in Hungary – the first EU member to begin vaccinating with the Russian vaccine despite the wait for approval from Brussels.

"Leftist political forces continue their anti-vaccination campaign in many ways," a government statement posted on Facebook claimed. "One form of this is to question the effectiveness of certain vaccine types. This is why the government discloses the infection and death data after vaccinations. This data shows that every vaccine used in Hungary provides effective and strong protection against infection."

We ask everyone to take advantage of the possibility of vaccination. Vaccination saves lives.

The data, which spanned the Covid-19 inoculations administered in Hungary from last December through April 20, showed that a rate of only 95 per 100,000 people became infected with Covid-19 after being fully vaccinated with Sputnik V. That compared with an average rate of 408 per 100,000, including 555 per 100,000 among those who received Pfizer-BioNTech shots, 700 per 100,000 who were given AstraZeneca's vaccine, and 177 per 100,000 for those who used doses from Moderna.

The results were encouraging across the board, with just 0.4% of fully vaccinated Hungarians becoming infected with Covid-19, but Sputnik V was seemingly the biggest winner. Just one patient per 100,000 people inoculated with the vaccine caught Covid-19 and died, compared with an average rate of 20 per 100,000 and Pfizer-BioNTech's rate of 32 per 100,000.

The Sputnik V PR team said the data appeared to back up recent comments by Gergely Gulyas, chief of staff to Prime Minister Orban, indicating that the Russian and Chinese vaccines are outperforming Pfizer-BioNTech, and Sputnik V leads the pack.

However, while the figures are illuminating – especially given that Hungary defied the EU on Sputnik V and Sinopharm, and offered one of the most diverse slates of Covid-19 jabs in the world – it's not airtight or conclusive. They don't account for such variables as how the different vaccines are being administered, including which jabs have been given to a relatively high proportion of high-risk people.

Hungary started using Sputnik V in February. Orban, who has a history of clashing with the EU, was criticized for offering a vaccine without the European Medicines Agency giving its blessing, and for potentially undermining the bloc's coordinated vaccination efforts. But with the EU vaccination rollout lagging behind those in the UK and the US, he made no apologies for putting the lives of his constituents first.

“My opinion is that what I need, and what the Hungarian people need, is not an explanation but a vaccine, and if it is not coming from Brussels, then it must come from elsewhere,” Orban said in January. *“It cannot be that Hungarian people are dying because vaccine procurement in Brussels is slow.”*

Nearly 40% of Hungarians have received at least one Covid-19 vaccination shot, the highest rate in the EU. An extrapolation of the efficacy data that was released on Sunday showed that some 212,000 people have been fully vaccinated with Sputnik V, the third most commonly administered of the five shots. Pfizer-BioNTech leads with 549,000, followed by Sinopharm at 490,000.