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Russian Army to Test Coronavirus Vaccine on Troops

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Russian officials say 47 coronavirus vaccines are in various stages of development across the country.
Sergei Karpukhin / TASS

Russia's military said it has recruited dozens of volunteers among its ranks for two-month clinical trials of a coronavirus vaccine set to begin Wednesday.

Bioweapons researchers are working with health officials on developing a coronavirus vaccine, one of 47 that Russian officials say are in various stages of development. The military said preclinical trials for its vaccine wrapped up Monday.

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"Fifty military personnel, including five women, have volunteered to test the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine," the Defense Ministry said in a statement Tuesday.

The volunteers from the various branches of the Russian military have been ruled to be

disease-free following one month of tests and monitoring, it said.

They will be moved Wednesday to the grounds of the Defense Ministry's Microbiology Research Institute in the Moscow region "for a preliminary in-depth medical exam and preparations for the experiment."

Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu informed President Vladimir Putin last week that clinical trials of the coronavirus vaccine would be completed by late July.

Russia's health minister said in May that a Covid-19 vaccine would be available as soon as late July. U.S. officials hope to develop one by the first half of 2021.

World Health Organization data estimates that more than 100 draft vaccines were in development worldwide as of late April. International health experts say even the most optimistic timetable for a coronavirus vaccine is at least 12-18 months.

Russia is the world's third most-affected country by the pandemic, with more than 423,000 coronavirus cases since its outbreak began in early March.

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