

Russia Eyes First Coronavirus Vaccine Launch in Mid-August

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Russia is one of several countries racing to develop the sought-after coronavirus vaccine. **Moskva News Agency**

Russian scientists said Monday they hope the world's first coronavirus vaccine will be distributed to patients as soon as next month after a medical university in Moscow said it completed clinical trials using human volunteers.

The Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University [launched](#) clinical trials of the potential Covid-19 vaccine on 38 paid volunteers in June. Around the same time, Russia's military began a parallel two-month clinical trial of the same vaccine developed by the state-run Gamaleya National Research Center for Epidemiology and Microbiology.

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The Gamaleya center's head Alexander Gintsburg [told](#) the state-run TASS news agency that he hopes the vaccine will "enter civil circulation" on Aug. 12-14. He added that he hopes

private companies would begin mass production by September.

“The research has been completed and it proved that the vaccine is safe,” Yelena Smolyarchuk, the head of the Sechenov University’s clinical research center, [told](#) TASS of its trial.

The Sechenov University's two groups of volunteers will be discharged Wednesday and next Monday after spending 28 days in isolation to protect them from exposure to other infections, she added. The volunteers, aged 18 to 65, will be monitored for six more months after their release.

Earlier in July, Smolyarchuk [said](#) that some participants experienced typical responses to injections, such as headaches and an elevated body temperature, which resolved within 24 hours.

“The Russian Health Ministry will make a decision on the substance effectiveness based on the results of” biochemical tests, the university said in a July 3 press release.

The ministry “hopes to finalize the trials ... before fall,” it added.

The Gamaleya Research Center [said](#) earlier in May that its own scientists were self-administering the vaccine, a move criticized by some experts.

The decision to involve the general public in vaccine trials underscores Russia’s desire to move ahead fast with its testing of the sought-after coronavirus vaccine.

Russia has the world’s fourth-highest number of coronavirus infections after the United States, Brazil and India. The Kremlin has previously said the nation’s scientists are working on almost 50 different vaccine projects, while scientists have [said](#) developing a vaccine is “a question of national prestige.”

Though the race to develop a vaccine that would help the population develop herd immunity is in full swing around the world, recent research suggests that asymptomatic patients could have a weaker immune response to Covid-19 because their antibodies [fade](#) as early as two months after infection.

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