The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Elderly Coronavirus Vaccine Recipients 'Healthy,' Russian Developer Says

September 02, 2020



Sputnik V's registration last month as the world's first coronavirus vaccine before large-scale clinical trials has sparked controversy. **Sergei Kiselyov / Moskva News Agency**

Elderly scientists who helped develop Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine have not reported adverse effects after being injected, the head of the research institute behind the inoculation told the state-run RIA Novosti news agency Wednesday.

Sputnik V's registration last month as the world's first coronavirus vaccine before large-scale clinical trials has sparked questions over its effectiveness and safety. Experts have warned it could cause harm to patients aged 60 and older, who develop more severe forms of Covid-19 and have the highest death rates.

Alexander Gintsburg, the head of Moscow's state-run Gamaleya Institute which developed the vaccine, said that around a dozen of its employees aged between 70 and 80 had taken the shots and did not report complications.

"They're all fit, healthy, active, they're giving lectures, managing patients and playing

sports," Gintsburg told RIA Novosti.

"The vaccination did not affect them in any way," he added.

Gintsburg, 68, has said he has also taken the adenoviral vector-based vaccine.

His remarks came amid a flurry of reports saying that several high-level Russian government officials have taken the Sputnik V vaccine over the past weeks.

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> Владимир Жириновский сделал прививку от коронавируса, а заодно предрек смерть миллионов американцев. Видео: Daily Storm pic.twitter.com/1Wfd6FBrKI
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A Bloomberg report in July suggested that "several hundred" Russian business and political leaders have inoculated themselves with the potential vaccine since April, months before its early trials and registration.

Health officials said this week that only 2,500 out of 40,000 volunteers have been recruited for Phase 3 trials of Sputnik V so far.

Gintsburg told RIA Novosti on Wednesday that volunteers in the 60-80 age group will be recruited among the residents of Moscow.

"I hope that what I just told you will be officially confirmed and the vaccine will be allowed to be used for older people," Gintsburg said.

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