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Vaccinated Siberian Medics Get Coronavirus

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The Altai region has the 18th-highest number of coronavirus infections out of Russia's 85 regions.
Sophia Sandurskaya / Moskva News Agency

At least three medics who received Russia's vaunted Sputnik V vaccine have contracted the coronavirus in Siberia as part of a vaccination drive of at-risk groups, regional authorities said Tuesday.

The adenovirus vector-based vaccine's developer had previously suggested that recipients infected with Covid-19 may have received a placebo during final clinical trials. Authorities are administering Sputnik V to a select group of medics and teachers nationwide in parallel with Moscow, where the vaccine is undergoing 40,000-volunteer trials.

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Officials in the Altai region reported that three out of the 42 medics who received the two-dose Sputnik V vaccine have been infected with Covid-19, according to the state-run TASS

news agency.

“The sick doctors’ immunity likely didn’t have time to form by the time they encountered the Covid-19 pathogen,” the Altai region’s administration said.

“Only that could have caused the doctors’ infection,” it added.

The Altai region, which in absolute terms has the 18th-highest number of coronavirus infections out of Russia's 85 regions, is scheduled to receive a second batch of 2,000 Sputnik V vaccines in early 2021, TASS reported.

Following a similar announcement by Pfizer and BioNTech, Russia’s Health Ministry said Monday that Sputnik V is more than 90% effective. The percentage is based on data collated from vaccinations of the public rather than from the vaccine's ongoing Phase 3 trials, Reuters reported.

Sputnik V faces equipment shortages that could delay it from entering mass production, President Vladimir Putin said earlier in November as reports suggested that developers have paused clinical trials due to the shortages.

A record number of Russians have gotten infected and died of Covid-19 in recent weeks as authorities have gradually imposed targeted restrictions to slow its spread and raised hopes of mass vaccination.

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