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Russia's Sputnik V Coronavirus Vaccine 'Reasonably Effective' – British Experts

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India, Brazil, China and South Korea are among the countries set to localize production of the Sputnik V vaccine. **Natalia Kolesnikova / AFP**

Russia's highly touted Sputnik V vaccine is "reasonably effective" at preventing the coronavirus based on preliminary results from its mass trials but questions over its data still remain, British vaccine experts told Canada's CBC News broadcaster Saturday.

Sputnik V's developers announced the vaccine's 95% efficacy last week, citing data obtained 21 days after volunteers received the second of its two doses. Much like previous Sputnik V results, the news was met with initial skepticism by Western scientists, who question the integrity of the data released under the Kremlin's careful watch.

Related article: Russia Says Its Sputnik V Coronavirus Vaccine 95% Effective

"I see no reason to doubt" the results published by Russia's state-run Gamaleya research center, Ian Jones, professor of virology at the University of Reading, told the CBC.

"I agree that their initial results caused consternation, but I don't think it's because they weren't valid. They were released a bit soon," Jones said.

Sputnik V's results are "consistent with what we see with other [adenovirus-based] vaccines," Stephen Evans, professor of pharmacoepidemiology at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, told the CBC.

This allows one to assess that the Russian vaccine is "reasonably effective," Evans said, but does not necessarily mean that the data released by Russia can be trusted.

"We do not know how carefully their trials are monitored and how carefully they are reported. We do not know that," he said.

Italian biologist Enrico Bucci, one of the scientists who openly questioned Sputnik V's Phase 1 trial data, told the CBC that the latest results did not convince him of the vaccine's efficacy as they contained several notable discrepancies.

"The sample is too low to claim any percentage of efficacy," Bucci said.

Despite the skepticism, more than 50 countries have already requested to purchase or localize production of Sputnik V. However, Evans said he believes that these countries' decisions were mainly based on confidence in the science behind the vaccine.

"The countries that are buying it are buying it on trust that the Russians have produced something," Evans said.

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