To: CAHAN San Diego Participants  
Date: April 15, 2021  
From: Public Health Services  

Health Advisory Update #31: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Vaccine Adverse Events and Update

Key Messages

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has provided clinical information on Cerebral Venous Sinus Thrombosis (CVST) following vaccination with the Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) COVID-19 vaccine.  
- Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) voted to continue a pause in the use of the Janssen vaccine.  
- A Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity (COCA) is scheduled for April 15, 2021, 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm (ET).

Situation

Six patients developed symptomatic cerebral venous sinus thrombosis (CVST) within two weeks (median of nine days) after receiving the Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) COVID-19 vaccine. All six had thrombocytopenia (<150,000 platelets/μL). A seventh case that occurred in a male during clinical trials was also identified. This syndrome was first described following heparin administration (heparin-induced thrombocytopenia or HIT). Similar thrombotic events followed use of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine in other countries associated with antibodies against platelet factor 4 (PF4). Thrombosis with thrombocytopenia has not been reported with either of the mRNA vaccines approved for use in the U.S. Additional clinical information is available here. On April 14, 2021, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) voted to continue pausing use of the Janssen vaccine pending further investigation of these CVST cases and additional review of available safety data. A CDC sponsored Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity (COCA) on this topic is scheduled for April 15, 2021, 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm (ET): Call details (and later, the recording) are here.

Actions Requested

1. Pause vaccination using the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine. Follow CDC guidance on vaccine maintenance.  
2. Inquire about recent (within 30 days) vaccination for COVID-19 in patients who present with signs and symptoms consistent with CVST or other thrombotic events. These cases should be tested for SARS-CoV-2.  
3. In persons vaccinated with the Janssen vaccine in the past three weeks and experiencing symptoms consistent with serious thrombotic events or thrombocytopenia:  
   - Obtain platelet counts and screen for evidence of thrombotic thrombocytopenia.  
   - Screen for heparin-induced thrombocytopenia using an enzyme-linked immunosorbent (ELISA) assay for PF4 antibodies (HIT test) and consider consultation with a hematologist.  
4. Do not treat thrombotic thrombocytopenia with heparin, unless HIT testing is negative. Instead, consider non-heparin anticoagulants and high-dose intravenous immune globulin.  
5. Report vaccine-related adverse events and deaths and vaccine administration errors to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS), and to the County Immunization Program at IZINFO.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov or Fax: (619) 692-5677.

Thank you for your participation.

CAHAN San Diego

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