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WEEKLY EU HEALTHCARE NEWS UPDATE

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EUROPE TO CONSIDER WAYS TO INCREASE THE MONKEYPOX VACCINE

The European health officials are pondering over following the US example of expanding the scarce monkeypox vaccine supplies, calling for more data from the World Health Organization (WHO).

In line with the Reuters report, the supplies of the Bavarian Nordic shot, the only vaccine authorized to use against monkeypox, are scarce. Given the insufficient vaccine resources, European experts could also consider the US-backed "dose-sharing" approach. This is about administering one vial of the vaccine up to five separate doses via injecting a smaller amount in between layers of the skin. This method has been previously used during, for instance, polio and yellow fever. Nevertheless, there is limited evidence on whether this might work for monkeypox as well.

As informed, the European Medicines Agency (EMA) will discuss the above-mentioned approach with the manufacturer, as well as European countries. Meanwhile, some governments are taking their measures to extend the existing supplies. Britain, for example, is offering just one shot of the two-dose regimen to people mostly from the risk groups to afford protection to a greater number of population.

So far, 27,800 monkeypox cases have been reported, causing 12 deaths worldwide.

Source: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/europe-consider-dose-sparing-increase-monkeypox-vaccine-who-seeks-trials-2022-08-10/>

COVID-19: MODERNA'S VACCINES DELIVERY SCHEDULES ADAPTED

The European Commission and Moderna have reached an agreement on an additional 15 million booster doses of COVID-19 vaccines, including the variant-adapted ones. The aim is to efficiently address the EU Member States' needs for COVID-19 vaccines.

This agreement will also adapt the originally agreed contractual delivery schedules. This means that the doses that were initially planned for delivery in the summer will be sent in the autumn and winter period of 2022. According to the Commission statement, Member States will more likely require additional stocks of vaccines during these seasons. Moreover, states will also be able to choose vaccines adapted for new variants, as soon as they are approved by the European Medicines Agency (EMA).

EU Health Commissioner Stella Kyriakides stressed that "increasing COVID-19 vaccination and booster rates will be crucial ahead of the autumn/winter months". Earlier, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) informed that COVID-19 cases are still high though the transmission has been diminishing.

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_22_4843

EU COURT OF JUSTICE EXPANDS DEFINITION OF SENSITIVE DATA

The court ruling will require the companies to protect data even indirectly related to sensitive information. Companies might have a tough time filtering the data that they possess.

In line with the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation, information on health, religion, political views, and sexual orientation are considered sensitive. Hence, companies are not allowed to process this information without applying special safeguards.

It is important to mention that data that might be used to infer a sensitive piece of information about a person is also sensitive. Furthermore, it might also include unstructured data, which could become a real challenge for the companies to analyze and deal with. An example might be the surveillance camera footage in a hospital with information on the person treated there.

Experts alert that the above-mentioned court ruling raises practical difficulties in understanding if the data is sensitive or not, especially for those organizations that use large data sets.

Source: https://www.wsj.com/articles/eu-court-expands-definition-of-sensitive-data-prompting-legal-concerns-for-companies-11660123800?mod=tech_featst_pos3

Thank you for your attention!

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