health
Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Date:	28 June 2021		
To:	**Acting Minister MT Kubayi-Ngubane, MP** **Honourable Minister of Health**	From:	**Ministerial Advisory Committee (MAC) on COVID-19 Vaccines**

ADVISORY
IMPLICATIONS OF DELTA VARIANT FOR VACCINATION STRATEGY

Problem Statement

- The Delta variant (B.1.617.2) is rapidly increasing in prevalence in South Africa, according to data presented by the Network for Genomic Surveillance South Africa (NGS-SA) – it seems to be displacing the previously dominant Beta variant (501Y.V2/B.1.351).

Points considered

- The main property of the Delta variant is its significantly increased transmissibility.
- Laboratory data demonstrate that the Delta variant is less resistant to antibody neutralization than the Beta variant.
- Data from the vaccination programme in the United Kingdom show that the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine retains very high levels of protection against severe disease caused by the Delta variant.
- Based on laboratory data and our understanding of how variants affect vaccine protection, it is likely that the Johnson & Johnson vaccine will also be effective against severe disease caused by the Delta variant.

Recommendations

- The current vaccination strategy utilising Pfizer-BioNTech and Johnson & Johnson vaccines remains appropriate.
- The priority should be to accelerate vaccinations, in view of the increased transmissibility of the Delta variant.
- There is currently no indication to change the 42-day dosing interval for the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.

Thank you for consideration of this request.

Kind regards,

PROFESSOR BARRY SCHOUB
CHAIRPERSON: MINISTERIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON COVID-19 VACCINES
DATE: 28 June 2021

CC:

» **Dr S Buthelezi (Director-General)**

» **Dr T Pillay (Deputy Director-General: Health Regulations and Compliance Management)**