ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF IRELAND

National Immunisation Advisory Committee

UPDATED RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING SELECTION, DOSE AND TIMING OF BOOSTER DOSES OF COVID-19 VACCINE FOR THOSE

AGED 80 YEARS AND OLDER

AGED 65 YEARS AND OLDER IN LONG TERM CARE FACILITIES (LTCFs)

AGED 60-79 YEARS

NIAC | 03.11.2021

Updated recommendations regarding selection, dose and timing of booster doses of COVID-19 vaccine

A booster dose of an mRNA vaccine is recommended for all those aged 80 and older, those living in LTCFs aged 65 and older and all those aged 60-79 years who have completed their primary course with any COVID-19 vaccine.

A full dose of Comirnaty (0.3ml/30 micrograms) or half dose of Spikevax (0.25ml/50 micrograms) should be given after an interval of six months or longer following completion of the primary course. A minimum interval of five months may be used when necessary for operational reasons.

The booster dose can be given at the same time or at any interval before or after seasonal influenza vaccine.

Rationale

On 4 October 2021, the EMA stated that a booster dose of Comirnaty (0.3ml, full dose) may be considered in those aged 18 years and older. The safety and immunogenicity of a booster dose of Comirnaty was based on data in those aged 18 to 55 years who showed a rise in antibody levels when a booster dose was given approximately six months (range 4.8 to 8.0 months) after the second dose. The EMA concluded that booster doses may be considered at least six months after the second dose for those 18 years and older.

Booster doses of Comirnaty have not shown any unexpected patterns with regard to short term safety when administered at least five months after an mRNA primary vaccine course.

On 25 October 2021, the EMA stated that a booster dose of Spikevax (0.25ml, half the dose of the primary schedule) may be considered in those aged 18 years and older. Current data indicate that the pattern of side effects after the booster is similar to what occurs after the second dose. The potential risk of myocarditis following an mRNA booster dose has yet to be characterised and will be closely monitored.

The safety and immunogenicity of a booster dose of Spikevax was based on data in those aged 18 years and older who showed a rise in antibody levels when a booster dose was given at least six months after the second dose. On the basis of this data, the EMA concluded that booster doses may be considered at least six months after the second dose for those aged 18 years and older.

Most of the evidence regarding booster vaccination relates to the use of an mRNA vaccine. There are limited data on the use of adenoviral vector booster vaccines. The results of heterologous studies carried out as primary or booster immunisation indicate that an adenoviral vector vaccine followed by an mRNA vaccine is safe and immunogenic.

Having reviewed this and additional data, NIAC recommends that a full dose of Comirnaty (0.3ml/30 micrograms) or half dose of Spikevax (0.25ml/50 micrograms) should be given after an interval of six months or longer following completion of the primary course. A minimum interval of five months may be used when necessary for operational reasons.

Relevant prior recommendations for reference

Recommendations regarding booster doses of COVID-19 vaccine for those aged 80 years and older and those aged 65 and older in long term care facilities

7 September 2021. A booster dose of an mRNA vaccine should be given to all those aged 80 and older and those living in LTCFs aged 65 and older who have completed their primary course with any vaccine type. The booster dose should be given after an interval of six months following the last dose of an authorised COVID-19 vaccine and can be given at the same time or at any interval before or after seasonal influenza vaccine.

Recommendations regarding booster doses of COVID-19 vaccine for those aged 60 to 79 years

22 October 2021: A booster dose of Comirnaty is recommended for all those aged 60 to 79 years who have completed their primary course with any COVID-19 vaccine. The booster dose should be given after an interval of six months (or at least five months) following the last dose of any authorised COVID-19 vaccine, or any time thereafter. It can be given at the same time or at any interval before or after seasonal influenza vaccine.