

JCVI Secretariat
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Miriam Cates MP
Member of Parliament for Penistone and Stocksbridge
House of Commons
London
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20 January 2022

Dear Miriam Cates MP,

Re: Review of Child Vaccination Programme

Thank you for your letter requesting JCVI to review the evidence for the vaccination of 12 – 15 year olds in the light of new evidence, including in relation to the Omicron variant.

JCVI regularly reviews the advice it formulates as new data emerge. How the epidemiology of COVID-19 might change following the current Omicron wave is highly uncertain. In particular, it is not certain whether Omicron will continue to be dominant. A novel variant could also emerge in 2022 with characteristics that are more akin to Delta, or Gamma, rather than Omicron.

Specifically, in relation to the study by Patone et al., the sub-analysis of data reporting the rate of myocarditis following the second dose of the Moderna vaccine (mRNA-1273) in males aged <40 years was highlighted in your letter. We note the following points: i) the study by Patone et al. was conducted in persons aged 16 years and above; ii) the Moderna vaccine (mRNA-1273) is not being used in the UK for persons aged <18 years old; iii) rates of myocarditis, both following infection or vaccination, in younger *adults* cannot be directly compared with rates in younger *children* because these rates vary by age. Overall, the study by Patone et al. is informative, but is not considered directly applicable to the situation in persons aged < 16 years. More recent data from the MHRA indicates that the reporting rate of myocarditis following vaccination in persons aged <18 years in the UK is lower than rates reported in other countries such as the US. This may reflect the use of a longer dose interval in the UK. A weekly summary of Yellow Card reporting is provided on the Government website (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-vaccine-adverse-reactions/coronavirus-vaccine-summary-of-yellow-card-reporting>).

The current JCVI advice regarding the offer of COVID-19 vaccination to 12 – 15 year olds who are not in a clinical risk group only pertains to the primary course of vaccination. Whether children aged < 16 years who are not in a clinical risk group require any booster doses in 2022, or in future years, has not yet been determined. Other vaccine products are actively being developed including the possibility of nasal vaccines which may improve mucosal immunity. These, and other new data, will be reviewed by JCVI on a regular basis to inform the formulation of future advice, as appropriate.

Yours sincerely

Professor Wei Shen Lim
COVID-19 chair of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation.