

Virology Expert: Vaccine is Not One and Only Solution to Stop Covid-19

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At present, Indonesia is conducting clinical trials of the Sinovac vaccine from China. This trial was conducted on several volunteers as a phase of phase 3 clinical trials in Indonesia to evaluate the efficacy or reliability of the vaccine. Nevertheless, vaccines are not the only way to stop the Covid-19 pandemic, because previous coronavirus outbreaks such as SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV successfully stopped without vaccines.

This statement was stated by Mohamad Saifudin Hakim, MSc., Ph.D., as a virology expert from the UGM FKKMK, dr. on Monday (17/8), reacted to the phase three clinical trial of the Covid-19 vaccine, which is currently being examined in Indonesia. As his familiar name said, Hakim said that early coronavirus outbreaks such as the 2002-2003 SARS-CoV and 2012 MERS-CoV had successfully stopped without vaccines. Countries that have succeeded in holding back the rate of increase in Covid-19 cases, such as China itself, South Korea, New Zealand, and Taiwan, can suppress the rise in cases with well-executed and disciplined prevention efforts. "I reckon the government should make more various efforts to prevent the spread of Covid-19 optimally. However, there should be cooperation from the community to be disciplined in implementing efforts to prevent transmission. We have to really mean it," he said.

In his remarks, preventive measures such as case isolation, contact tracing and quarantine, physical

imprisonment, using masks and washing hands, and community quarantine (lockdown) are urgently needed.

According to him, although the Sinovac vaccine product is currently being examined clinically, it cannot be claimed that this will be effective in the future, because it is necessary to wait for clinical trials. "Do not rush to conclude that the vaccine currently being clinically tested will be effective and be the choice for distribution. That is too early," he added.

He assessed that vaccine candidates that have entered the phase 3 clinical trial do not guarantee that the clinical trial will be successful. Many vaccine candidates have undergone phase 3 trials but failed because they proved to be ineffective.

However, Hakim argued that the Covid-19 vaccine's development is currently one of the efforts made by many countries to stop the pandemic. This condition is because many studies have shown that antibodies formed after SARS-CoV-2 infection naturally do not last long and disappear in 2-3 months.

Suppose later, the results of the Sinovac vaccine trial are successful in Indonesia. Indeed, it will be in the list of national immunization programs. According to him, the program's continuity will depend on sufficient vaccine supply. Therefore, he hopes that Indonesia can produce its own. "Sure, it will be easier to ascertain if we can produce our vaccines, compared to import products," he said.

According to him, PT. Biopharma is a party that has owned the technology for inactivated vaccines. However, the vaccine's mass production is still awaiting the results of this phase three clinical trial. "If this vaccine is proven to be effective and safe, then mass production can begin. Only then will the agreement between Sinovac, the Indonesian government, and PT. Biofarma, how many parts of the vaccine production will be produced by Biofarma," he said.

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