



Norway warns frail patients of vaccine risks after deaths

BY CELINE CASTRONUOVO - 01/15/21 09:50 AM EST

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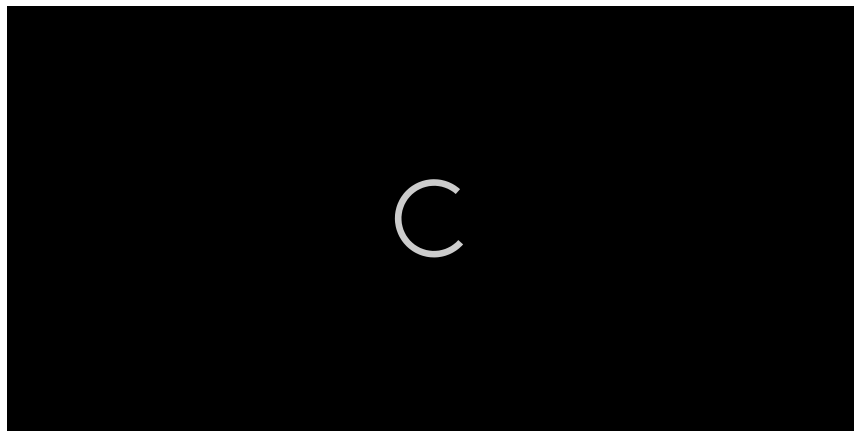
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Officials in Norway on Thursday warned that those over 80 and the terminally ill may be at risk for fatal side effects from the COVID-19 vaccine after the European country's health agency reported a series of deaths among elderly individuals who received the inoculation.

The Norwegian Medicines Agency announced in [a press release](#) that as of Thursday, the Norwegian health registry has received reports of 23 people who died shortly after receiving their first dose of the vaccine.

Of those deaths, 13 have been autopsied and revealed that the common side effects associated with the vaccine may have contributed to more severe reactions among frail, elderly people.

The health agency said that all the fatalities occurred among patients in nursing homes who were well over the age of 80.

Sigurd Hortemo, chief physician at the Norwegian Medicines Agency, said side effects such as fever and nausea "may have contributed to a fatal outcome in some frail patients."

However, the agency also noted that in the country's vaccination campaign for elderly individuals, many of whom are in nursing homes with serious underlying conditions, "it is expected that deaths close to the time vaccination may occur."

According to the agency, an average of 400 Norwegians die each week in nursing homes and long-term care facilities.

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“For those with the most severe frailty, even relatively mild vaccine side effects can have serious consequences,” the Norwegian Institute of Public Health said, [according to Bloomberg](#). “For those who have a very short remaining life span anyway, the benefit of the vaccine may be marginal or irrelevant.”

The warning from Norway about the vaccine's effects on the elderly is the most severe thus far.

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Countries around the world have begun to implement mass vaccination campaigns to combat COVID-19, which has infected more than 93 million people globally and killed nearly 2 million worldwide, according to [data compiled by Johns Hopkins University](#).

Last week, the U.S. [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) [announced](#) that allergic reactions to COVID-19 vaccinations are relatively rare. The CDC said that of nearly 2 million people who were vaccinated against COVID-19 during a 10-day period in December, only 21 people experienced severe allergic reactions.

The agency added that most of those people had a history of allergies or allergic reactions, and for the 20 people the CDC followed up with, all had recovered and been sent home.

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