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# More important to focus on number of vaccinated individuals than on Covid-19 cases—WHO

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It is more important to focus on the number of vaccinated people in the country than on the number of Covid-19 cases, World Health Organization's (WHO's) representative to the Philippines Dr. Rajendra Yadav said.



WHO representative to the Philippines Dr. Rajendra Yadav (Screenshot taken from Laging Handa FB Live)

Recently, the country has been experiencing a steady decline in the number of Covid-19 cases.

But Yadav noted that the government is currently “prioritizing testing among high-risk groups and we are not testing as much as we were testing in the past months.”

“We should not rely on the number of cases to know whether we have too much Covid-19 or not rather we need to focus on increasing our vaccination,” the WHO representative said during a “Laging Handa” briefing on Monday, April 18.

“In short, whether the numbers will increase or not only time will tell. But also, we should not focus too much on the number [of Covid-19] cases, rather, the number people who are vaccinated, that is more important,” he continued.

## Inoculate more people

Yadav said the national government has already done a “tremendous commendable” job in ensuring there is ample supply of Covid-19 vaccines in the country.

“Now it is up to the local government units and local chief executives to ensure that the vaccines reach the people who are still not vaccinated,” he said.

According to the WHO representative, the country has reached “around 60 percent vaccination if we take the total population as a denominator.”

Yadav said that over 70 percent of vaccination must be attained in order to “create adequate herd immunity.”

“But unfortunately, many many barangays are still nowhere close to 70 percent,” he noted.

Local executives in areas with low inoculation rates, he said, must step up to vaccinate more people in their respective areas.

“So the local chief executives where barangays have low coverage need to step up the reaching the unreached through last-mile approach, which basically means using house-to-house vaccination and close-to-home vaccinations,” Yadav said.

The WHO representative said the local executives must reach out to people in their areas who have more challenges accessing Covid-19 vaccines.

“So rather than waiting for them at vaccination sites, we have to reach out to them for them to get vaccinated. That’s the best thing we can do.”

Testing is important, but...

While testing is important to know if there are new variants of concern, Yadov said “testing is less of a priority now.”

“But WHO recommends that we can prioritize high-risk groups for testing. So there is no fixed number we can give. Ideally, we should test everyone who is high-risk including frontline health workers and vulnerable groups like elderly people,” he said when asked by the media how many tests should be conducted.

“If resources are there, then we can test more numbers like developed countries do,” he added.

Yadov said the focus now should be more on vaccination, saying resources should be directed at getting more people inoculated.

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