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WHO approves AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine under emergency use listing

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AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine has been granted emergency use listing (EUL) by the World Health Organization (WHO) for active immunisation to prevent COVID-19 in individuals 18 years of age and older, including those over 65.

The authorisation of COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca manufactured by AstraZeneca, and Covishield manufactured by Serum Institute of India (SII), enables global access to the vaccine during the pandemic.

The EUL allows for two doses of the vaccine to be administered at a four to 12-week interval. This regimen was shown in clinical trials to be safe and effective in preventing symptomatic COVID-19, with no severe cases and no hospitalisations more than 14 days after the second dose.

AstraZeneca and SII will now work with the COVAX Facility to begin supplying the vaccine around the world, with the majority going to low and middle-income countries as quickly as possible.

Pascal Soriot, Chief Executive Officer, AstraZeneca, said, "Today's approval endorses that the vaccine can be used to help protect populations across the world, including adults over 65 years and in countries where different variants of the SARS-CoV-2 virus are in circulation."

Adar Poonawalla, Chief Executive Officer, Serum Institute of India, said, "I am happy and relieved that with the WHO's EUL we will be able to start the deliveries to African and other low and middle-income countries immediately. Countries with a large population must be protected as soon as possible."

AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine can be stored, transported and handled at normal refrigerated conditions (two-eight degrees Celsius/36-46 degrees Fahrenheit) for at least six months and administered within existing healthcare settings.