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'Mix & match' of vaccines can be effective against emerging variants?

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Administering the same doses may lead to less effectiveness



With the Government of India announcing a booster dose for healthcare frontline workers and people above 60 years, confusion has prevailed as to how the third dose of vaccine can be instrumental in preventing the Omiron variant, which is spreading in India these days with many getting infected. A majority of the Indian population has been administered with Covishield vaccine and the question remains on how a third dose of the same vaccine will be able to safeguard from the current covid variant.

Says Dr Subhrojyoti Bhowmick, Clinical Director, Academics and Research, Peerless Hospital, “Though named as ‘Precaution dose’, the question remains on the effectiveness of the same vaccine which will be administered after nine months post the second dose of vaccine. The need of the hour is to upgrade the vaccine in relation to the latest covid variant.”

Dr Bhowmick is in favour of mix & match vaccines as many developed countries have found it to be a success in preventing COVID-19 variants. According to him, anyone who has been administered Covishield can be given Covaxin. The Govt of India needs to think on this matter.

According to Dr Rajesh Chawla, Senior Consultant, Pulmonology and Critical Care, Indraprastha Apollo Hospital, New Delhi, the different COVID-19 variants reduce the efficacy of the vaccine. To continue to protect people from severe disease, a high antibody level in the body is needed, which can be completed through a booster dose. Booster doses will augment the efficacy of the vaccine and protection from different variants can be maintained. This efficacy can be attained by single vaccines also and by the mix & match of two vaccines.

Sanjiv Das

sanjiv.das@mmactiv.com