Covid Warrior Experience with Covishield Vaccine- Self Experimentation

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Introduction

The pandemic caused by COVID-19 is affecting populations and healthcare systems worldwide. Vaccine hesitancy is regarded by the World Health Organization as the world's most serious hazard to public health, particularly in low- and middle-income nations [1]. Vaccine apprehension might stem from a lack of understanding, erroneous religious views, or anti-vaccine propaganda. The current state of anti-vaccine views is pointing to disastrous consequences. It raises the question of whether, people will believe and embrace the new COVID-19 vaccines, despite anti-vaccine groups and COVID-19-related myths and conspiracy theories [2].

In this context, I would like to share my experience on the COVISHIELD vaccine and its efficiency followed by my own empiricisim. I work as a Scientist and Deputy General Manager for Lifecell International Pvt Ltd.'s Infectious Diseases-Molecular Genetics division. Since June 1st, 2020, I have been performing RNA isolation, PCR, data processing, and reporting at the COVID diagnostic lab. As a result, I had lot of COVID-positive coworkers, friends, and relatives in my life. Despite handling over 5 lakhs COVID samples in the previous year (June 2020–March 2021). I was never found to be COVID positive by RT PCR test until April 6th, 2021. Every 15 days, we test all of the workers (COVID warriors) involved in COVID processing as a preventive surveillance test. Similarly, I test myself for COVID antibodies once a month to see whether any antibodies have emerged in my serum to understand myself as a asymptomatic carrier or not from August 2020 to February 14th, 2021 and my antibody level was never elevated or found to be positive.

I jab my COVISHIELD vaccine from a government hospital in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India, on February 15, 2021. I didn't have any side effects from the vaccine, like as fever, drowsiness, or coughing. However, I experienced two days of minor discomfort in the vaccinated area. I tested myself for COVID antibody IgG and total antibodies on the second day after immunization and found that I was negative. To evaluate the vaccine's efficiency, I tested again 28 days following the vaccination date, in March 2021, and found that I was positive for both IgG (2.4) and total antibodies (5.3), the OD cut-off value. This is the first time I've had a seropositive result. I was delighted to see how antibody levels altered following immunization. On April 10th, 2021, despite the availability of antibodies, I became sick with SARS-CoV-2. I had severe symptoms of fever, cough, fatigue, and malaise for three days, and I self-quarantined with appropriate medicine as per the clinician's advice, and I recovered in five days.

I was curious to see how my antibodies developed after infection and noticed that they had a wider range than when I was immunized. Though it is not a quantitative method, the OD value difference I could figure out from the report on April 23, 2021, was 5.280 for IgG and 11.408 for total antibodies. I tested again on May 15th, 2021, after a 30-day infection and detected a decreased antibody level of IgG-2.8 and a total antibody level of 5.4, showing that the antibody had declined twofold following 30 days of infectious duration. I tested again on June 1st week, 2021, to double-check the data, and the findings were practically identical, with IgG-2.8 and total antibody 5.4, indicating the sustained range for the two months after infection. In this scenario, I received my second dose of COVISHIELD vaccination on June 19th, 2021. After receiving the second dose of COVISHIELD, I suffered

substantial physical discomfort and a mild temperature for three days, which I did not experience after receiving the first dose. This could be related to the fact that the second dose of the vaccine caused the viral particle to expand and proliferate, making me physically weak. Finally, COVID antibodies were evaluated on July 1st, 15 days after the second vaccination dosage.

Finally, COVID antibodies were tested on July 1st week, 15 days after the second dose of immunization, and anti-spike protein antibodies (14,578.3 AU/mL) were shown to be increased and COVID IgG-5.8, total COVID antibody 7.4 OD. Based on my personal experience, I believe the COVISHIELD vaccination is effective against the illness, reducing the intensity of the real viral pathogenicity, but it is not completely safe if exposed to new variants among the community. Despite the elevated antibodies, I am aware that I am not immune to the next COVID wave; if a new variant of interest is exposed to me, the risk of reinfection is 100%, albeit the severity may differ from that of someone who has never been vaccinated or infected. I shall be practicing the Social distance and Mask practice on a frequent basis as a precaution. Hence, I recommend every individual must take vaccine against COVID irrespective of its efficiency to safeguard ourselves from the future COVID waves with new variants. I also recommend taking third or fourth dose of vaccine, based on the antibody titre/seroprevalence among the population after 6months to 12 month period from the first dose of vaccination.

Acknowledgement

References

1. Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. WHO.

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