

- Virus

Allergy experts caution public vs taking antibody testing after COVID-19 vaccination

Manila Bulletin · 12 Jul 2021 · 1 · By GABRIELA BARON

The Philippine Society of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology (PSAAI) cautioned the public against taking antibody testing after coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccination to evaluate the level of protection against the virus.

In a statement released on Saturday, PSAAI said that antibody tests have not been evaluated and validated to assess the level of protection afforded by the immune response after COVID-19 vaccination.

It added that inaccurately interpreted antibody test results may "create a false sense of protection, making people more complacent with lesser observation of health care protocols."

The experts noted that the level of antibody that will provide protection against COVID-19 "remains undetermined" and neither a "positive" qualitative nor a "high" qualitative test result can tell if a person has enough protection against COVID-19 after vaccination.

"A positive antibody test result may indicate previous infection to COVID-19 or post-vaccination antibody protection. More research is needed to understand the meaning of a positive or a negative antibody test beyond the presence or absence of antibodies," PSAAI explained.

"COVID-19 vaccines not only stimulate the humoral arm of the immune system which produces the antibodies but also the cellular arm which involves the T cells. This generated T cell immunity is not measured by any antibody test."

In June, the Department of Health (DOH) clarified that a negative antibody test "does not mean that the COVID-19 vaccine did not work."

The United States Food and Drug Administration and Centers for Disease Control had both advised against testing one's antibody levels to determine whether they were protected after getting inoculated.

As of July 9, a total of 12,703,081 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine have been administered nationwide.

Around 9,493,839 individuals have received the first dose, while the remaining 3,209,242 have been fully vaccinated.