China approves human trials of COVID-19 vaccine

Beijing, March 22 (RHC)-- China’s Defense Minister announced that Chinese scientists developed a COVID-19 vaccine that has already been tested on a group of infected monkeys, which responded effectively and were immune.

"The quality of the vaccine will be controlled during the production process. We are ready to start formal clinical trials at any time,” Chen Wei, a Military Academy of Medical Sciences researcher, who is recognized worldwide for her studies of SARS and Ebola, said.

Chinese authorities reported that the vaccine could already begin to be tested in humans to speed up the deadlines. "The vaccine has been approved for its safety, efficacy and quality by third parties and has completed its preliminary preparation for mass production," the Defense Ministry said.

The World Health Organization (WHO) indicated that some 20 teams of scientists across the globe are also working on finding a vaccine, a task that was made easier after the sequencing of the gene.

“The acceleration of this process is really truly dramatic in terms of what we're able to do, building on work that started with SARS, that started with MERS and now is being used for COVID-19,” the WHO emergencies program member Maria Van Kerkhove said, as reported by CNBC.

However, officials from the multilateral institution warned that a safe vaccine could be available on the market for up to 18 months.

Under existing protocols, "clinical trials" are experimental evaluations of a vaccine to verify its safety and efficacy. In their first phase, these evaluations are administered to a hundred healthy volunteers to establish whether the substance is safe and does not cause collateral damage. Also, the best way to administer the vaccine and what would be the appropriate dose are evaluated.

In the second phase, clinical trials consist of administering the vaccine to a group of no more than 500 people. Finally, in a third phase, the vaccine is applied to thousands of people in various countries to check whether the new immunization protects the population against exposure to the pathogen. If the results are positive, the authorities grant authorization for the sale of the vaccine.

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