

OUR RESPONSE TO COVID-19**AGHAM AT KAALAMAN PARA SA BAYAN!****OFFICERS**

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Addressed to: COVID-19 IATF, DOH Key Decision-Makers, Senators, Congressmen, Executive and Legislative Branches of the Philippine Government

TUBERCULOSIS VACCINE TO CONTAIN COVID19 OUTBREAK

PAASE supports the trial of the BCG (Bacillus Calmette–Guérin) tuberculosis vaccine as a prophylactic for frontline healthcare professionals who are treating COVID19 patients, and are at a high risk of being infected by the virus.

This position is based on the following facts. Note however that no direct clinical evidence is yet available that establishes the protective properties of the BCG vaccine against COVID19.

(1) The BCG vaccine is safe. It has been around for more than 100 years and is still given to over 130 million babies annually to prevent tuberculosis (1). In addition to being a vaccine against tuberculosis, the BCG vaccine is also used as an immunotherapy for other diseases such as bladder cancer and other infectious diseases (2). For more information regarding the BCG vaccine, please see Bulletin #3.

(2) The rationale for using the vaccine is to stimulate the innate immune system, which is the first line of defense against all infections (3). The hope is that a primed innate immune system can reduce the prevalence and severity of COVID-19 symptoms in healthcare workers, who are currently defenseless.

(3) The same approach is being used in Australia, Netherlands, Germany and the United Kingdom (4).

References:

1. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3749764/>
2. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4427258/>
3. <https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/record/NCT04327206>
4. <https://www.sciencealert.com/australia-is-trialling-a-tb-vaccine-for-coronavirus-and-health-workers-get-it-first>

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