

Vaccine test hope for October

POST REPORTERS

A Thai research team could begin human trials of a Covid-19 vaccine as soon as this October, according to Suvit Maesincee, minister of Higher Education Science Research and Innovation.

The minister revealed the tentative human trial phase of Covid-19 vaccine after tests on monkeys showed encouraging results.

"After the first injections on monkeys on May 23 using an mRNA-type of vaccine, all the monkeys remained healthy and suffered no side-effects from the jabs. We also found an increased amount of antibodies in their blood," Mr Suvit said during an online press conference yesterday.

He said that the next round of animal trials would be in August which, if successful, would lead to human trials in October.

The vaccine is being jointly developed by experts from Chulalongkorn University's Centre of Excellence in Vaccine Research and Development, the National Vaccine Institute and the Department of Medical Sciences.



Suivit: Pleased by monkey results

The team of researchers are using mRNA technology.

Biologically, mRNA or Messenger RNA carries the blueprint of the cell's original DNA involved in the process of building viral protein.

"We are using mRNA technology, the newest method for developing vaccines, because the vaccine can

be developed rapidly and small amounts can be used to run tests," he said.

A Thai biotechnology company has been tasked with ensuring it will have the capability to produce enough vaccines.

Mr Suvit added that the National Research Council of Thailand has approved more funds for Chulalongkorn University to prepare to produce vaccines for tests on humans.

"Prime Minister Prayut Chan-ocha has provided policy to ensure that locally produced vaccines are given to Thais before being sent abroad if development is successful."

Other institutions in the country are also separately developing vaccines, with some currently conducting tests on animals.

Mr Suvit reportedly said that more than 150 prototype vaccines have so far been developed worldwide.