

AstraZeneca hails late-stage trial of new drug for vulnerable people not protected by Covid vaccines

AstraZeneca today said a Covid drug for vulnerable people not adequately protected by existing vaccines had shown encouraging results in a late-stage trial.

The pharmaceutical company said there were no cases of severe Covid-19 or deaths in those treated with AZD7442, which is a combination of two long-acting antibodies.

The University of Colorado's Myron Levin, the lead investigator on the trial, said: "With these exciting results, AZD7442 could be an important tool in our arsenal to help people who may need more than a vaccine to return to their normal lives."

There were more than 5,000 participants in the global trial, which focused on those with a potentially inadequate response to immunisation. Three-quarters had conditions that are associated with an increased risk for severe Covid-19 should they become infected.

Astra's biopharma R&D vice-president Mene Pangalos said: "We need additional approaches for individuals who are not adequately protected by Covid-19 vaccines."

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Pangalos added: "We are very encouraged by these efficacy and safety data in high-risk people, showing our long-acting antibody combination has the potential to protect from symptomatic and severe disease, alongside vaccines."

In a separate announcement, Astra said its recently acquired Alexion business has discontinued its trial of a potential treatment for adults with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, a rare disease affecting the nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord.