

COvid VACcination during LACtation: the COVALAC-study

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Background

Similar to other populations, breastfeeding women encounter SARS-CoV-2 and might contract COVID-19. The availability of new vaccines against COVID-19 and the recommendation to prioritize health care providers (HCPs) to be vaccinated, urged for guidance about vaccination during lactation as many of these HCPs are breastfeeding.

Aim

We aim to get an insight in the excretion of antibodies into breastmilk after vaccination with different types of vaccines. Additionally, we aim to evaluate the mother's motivation to get vaccinated during lactation.

Methods

The COVALAC-study is Belgian a prospective cohort study, part of the PREGCOVAC.BE-study, a larger ongoing trial researching the safety of COVID-vaccination in pregnant and lactating women. Women that were vaccinated with a COVID-vaccine during the lactation period were followed. Participants were recruited through midwife practices and social media. Participants could be included when they were older than 18 years, breastfeeding for at least 14 days, willing to be vaccinated with a COVID-vaccine and to donate breastmilk samples at multiple follow-up visits and able to provide informed consent.

Results

115 women were already recruited from February 15th to March 12th 2021. For all women, breastmilk samples were collected on day 1 and 14 after the first vaccination. For women vaccinated with the AstraZeneca-vaccine, an extra sample was provided 7 weeks after the first vaccination. Subsequently, a breastmilk sample was collected on day 7, 28 and 56 after the second vaccination. The study will end with a final breastmilk sample 180 days after the first vaccination. First, COVID-19-specific SIgA and IgG antibodies will be measured. The results of the first samples can be presented at the conference.

Conclusion

The study will contribute to the knowledge on SARS-COV-2 infections and vaccination. As vaccination during lactation could result in clinically relevant sIgA-titers in breastmilk and protecting the child in early life, it is of importance that women have this information to decide whether to take the vaccine.