When to suspect Cerebral venous sinus thrombosis following vaccination with the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine.
Statement of the Association of British Neurologists 26 March 2021 updated 25 April 2021

Cerebral venous sinus thrombosis has been reported following vaccination with the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine. It has also been associated with two other vaccines based on similar technology but which aren’t in use in the UK currently. The precise relationship between the vaccine and thrombosis remains unclear. Headache is a common symptom, and self-limiting headaches are well recognised following vaccination. The ABN has issued the following statement to enable clinicians to identify patients requiring urgent assessment for cerebral venous sinus thrombosis.

Cerebral venous sinus thrombosis should be considered in patients with onset of headache more than 4 days following vaccine and less than 28 days (mostly 7-14 days) if they have at least 1 of:

- Headache that is both
  - severe and
  - sudden onset (‘thunderclap’) or rapidly progressive over hours to days
- Features of raised intracranial pressure including: visual obscuration on coughing, sneezing, or bending; pulsatile tinnitus; or papilloedema
- Focal neurological symptoms or signs
- Altered conscious level or confusion
- Seizure


The British Society for Haematology has developed criteria for diagnosing Vaccine induced Thrombosis and Thrombocytopenia (VITT) (https://b-s-h.org.uk/).

More detailed guidance on the benefits and side effects of COVID-19 vaccines in available from the ABN [link to ABN guidance on vaccination for COVID-19 and neurological conditions updated 26 April 2021].