

## 'Delta' dreaded to cripple healthcare

**By Willie Casas**

THE more infectious coronavirus Delta variant, first detected in India, could cripple the country's health care system because of its more infectious nature, the OCTA Research Group said on Thursday.

OCTA fellow Ranjit Rye warned that the Delta variant, which he described as a game changer, could lead to a surge of COVID-19 cases in the country.

Rye warned also that Filipinos should not be complacent and must follow minimum public health protocols.

"We want to emphasize that the Delta variant is a game changer. If it enters the country, it will crumble our healthcare system due to the sudden rise of new cases and since the variant is very infec-

tious as well," Rye said in a public briefing.

"That's why our first message is that we need to take precautions, now is not the time to be complacent and to be neglectful," Rye said.

"All we know is that some of the vaccines may not be very effective against these new variants... It's not yet here in the country, it's not yet spreading, our goal is to prevent that from happening," he said.

As of June 21, the country

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has reported a total of 17 cases – although no transmission reported thus far – of the Delta variant but all of them were detected at the country's borders.

Rye urged the public to get vaccinated and at the same time to follow minimum public health protocols to fight against this new and infectious variant.

"All the variants we are fighting them with just one approach, or two actually. First and foremost is to get vaccinated and number two is to follow minimum public health standards," Rye said.

Rye said compared to the other variants such as the Alpha variant, first detected in the United Kingdom, the Delta variant was more contagious because one individual could spread the virus from six to eight other people.

"Just to give you a sense of the UK variant, if one professor is infected then the virus can spread from four to five people. While the new Delta variant can spread from six to eight other people, which only shows that it is a bigger number and it's very contagious," he said.

In terms of the vaccine efficacy, OCTA also said that some of the vaccines might not be "very effective" against the new variant called Delta plus.

Delta Plus is a mutation of the Delta variant which was tagged as the "new coronavirus variant of concern" by the government of India.

### Vaccination 'only way'

Vaccination against COVID-19 is the only way to stop the transmission and mutation of the coronavirus, the Food and Drug Administration said on Thursday.

FDA Director General Eric Domingo, in an interview on ABS-CBN's Teleradyo, said the COVID-19 vaccines being used in the country should remain effective against severe infection even if its protection could be reduced against new variants.

A UK study showed that the Delta variant first reported in India diminishes the efficacy of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine to 89 percent from 94 percent, and Astrazeneca's to 59 percent from 70 percent, Domingo said. *(See full story online at manilastandard.net)*