

Current major event

Update on new therapeutics for COVID-19

The medical and scientific communities have invested in and accelerated the development and availability of potential new COVID-19 therapeutics. New therapeutics are increasingly and rapidly becoming available, and regulatory agencies have already approved some of these drugs.

Editorial note

The latest new medications that are proven to be effective and recommended in the treatment of patients with COVID-19 are known as neutralizing monoclonal antibodies. These are man-made proteins that act like human antibodies, which are part of the immune system and work to fight infections. Two of these medications, Casirivimab and Imdevimab, have proven to be effective in certain patients with severe or non-severe COVID-19 disease. There are some specific criteria to determine if a patient is a good candidate for these new medications.

Other new medications can effectively suppress the over-reaction of the immune system to COVID-19. Systemic corticosteroids are an example of this group. They can be an injection or provided in pill form and used in patients with severe and critical COVID-19.

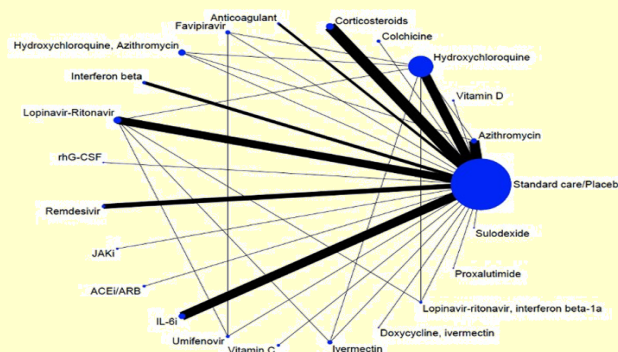
Interleukin-6 or IL-6 receptor blockers are another example that can be used for severely or critically ill patients with COVID-19 who suffer from immune system over-reaction. Interleukin-6 blocking drugs such as Tocilizumab and Sarilumab act to suppress this over-reaction. These IL-6 receptor blockers are proven to be effective in patients with severe or critical COVID-19.

There are medications in which WHO strongly recommends not to use in patients with COVID-19 including Ivermectin, Hydroxychloroquine, Lopinavir/Ritonavir and Remdesivir in hospitalized patients with COVID-19.

The WHO Guidelines Development Group (GDG) meets regularly to prepare for and review evidence from international clinical trials, and then develop clinical practice recommendations for the use of effective

Fig 1: Map from the living network meta-analysis.

Medications included in various studies are shown on this network map. The size of each blue circle correlates with the number of patients included in a clinical trial. The width of the line connecting two specific interventions correlates with the number of patients and number of events in this comparison across all trials.



WHO living guidance for therapeutics and clinical management of COVID-19

Living guidance on therapeutics for COVID-19:

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-clinical-2021-2>

Living guidance on the clinical management of COVID-19:

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-clinical-2021-2>

medications for COVID-19 patients. The current list of medications under review by the GDG include: JAK inhibitors (medications known as immunomodulators), Sotrovimab (an additional neutralizing monoclonal antibody), anticoagulants and fludoxamine (an antidepressant that has possible anti-inflammatory and antiviral effects). In addition, new antiviral medications, namely Molnupiravir and PF-07321332 are currently under review.

Three new drugs have been added to the latest phase of the WHO Solidarity clinical trials. Artesunate, Imatinib and Infiximab will be tested on hospitalized COVID-19 patients in 52 countries under the Solidarity PLUS programme.

WHO publishes a living guideline on therapeutics and COVID-19 which contains the most up-to-date recommendations. The sixth version of this guideline was published on 24 September 2021. Rapid adaptation and implementation of WHO's recommended therapeutics into the COVID-19 clinical care pathways is essential at national and local levels to maximize impact and improve patient outcomes.

Update on outbreaks

in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

COVID-19 in 22 EMR countries

Current public health events of concern

[cumulative N° of cases (deaths), CFR %]

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19): 2019-2021

Afghanistan	[156 911 (7303), 4.7%]
Bahrain	[277 348 (1394), 0.5%]
Djibouti	[13 501 (186), 1.4%]
Egypt	[349 513 (19 872), 5.7%]
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	[6 073 098 (128 852), 2.1%]
Iraq	[2 073 835 (23 642), 1.1%]
Jordan	[911 270 (11 347), 1.2%]
Kuwait	[413 120 (2464), 0.6%]
Lebanon	[658 467 (8635), 1.3%]
Libya	[367 811 (5380), 1.5%]
Morocco	[948 830 (147 61), 1.6%]
occupied Palestinian territory (oPt)	[458 273 (4774), 1%]
Oman	[304 488 (4113), 1.4%]
Pakistan	[1 281 872 (28 659), 2.2%]
Qatar	[241 969 (611), 0.3%]
Saudi Arabia	[549 443 (8823), 1.6%]
Somalia	[22 969 (1324), 5.8%]
Sudan	[41 794 (3103), 7.4%]
Syrian Arab Republic	[47 091 (2699), 5.7%]
Tunisia	[716 262 (25 344), 3.5%]
United Arab Emirates	[741 370 (2144), 0.3%]
Yemen	[9955 (1938), 19.5%]