

WEEK 3 WHAT RESEARCH HAS AND IS BEING DONE TO ADDRESS COVID-19?
STEP 3.7 FINDING TREATMENTS FOR COVID-19

Frequently asked questions

Question	Answer
What treatment options are currently being trialed?	<p>An overview of registered COVID-19 treatment trials and discussion of how they could work (up to March 8th 2020) can be accessed here - https://www.cebm.net/covid-19/registered-trials-and-analysis/</p> <p>The World Health Organization has also developed a living map of ongoing studies of treatments - https://www.covid-nma.com/dataviz/ and a living synthesis of study results - https://covid-nma.com/living_data/index.php</p> <p>The WHO has recently started an international clinical trial to help find an effective treatment for COVID-19 - The Solidarity Trial - which includes (at present) Remdesivir; Lopinavir/Ritonavir; Lopinavir/Ritonavir with Interferon beta-1a; and Chloroquine or Hydroxychloroquine - https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/global-research-on-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov/solidarity-clinical-trial-for-covid-19-treatments</p>
How can you volunteer for clinical trials?	Information about volunteering for clinical trials are included on websites of trial registration.
How is safety and ethical practice maintained in accelerated clinical trials?	Safety and ethics cannot be compromised in clinical trials and standards still need to be assured. Much can be gained if committees act quickly and expert review is done within a few days and not weeks. Such "preparedness" is going on and is saving time without compromising quality.
What are the effects of immune responses on survival outcomes for COVID-19?	<p>There is a wide variety of research being carried out to investigate differences in clinical outcomes and some researchers are focussing on the immune response associated with COVID-19 - http://apjai-journal.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/1.pdf - in particular the presence of hypercytokinemia (or cytokine 'storm') in severe cases of COVID-19.</p> <p>There are also examples of trials underway investigating the effectiveness of treatments intended to modulate the immune response. You can read more</p>

	<p>about the immune response here: https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(20)30628-0/fulltext</p>
<p>What is the association between disease severity and immune responses?</p>	<p>When a person comes into contact with a virus, the immune system seeks to stop the virus from hijacking its cellular machinery which the virus used to replicate. The speed and level of this immune response determine the course of the infection and whether it leads to disease. The relationship between viral load and severity for COVID-19 is unclear but here is a discussion of some key papers - https://www.phc.ox.ac.uk/covid-19/evidence-service/reviews/sars-cov-2-viral-load-and-the-severity-of-covid-19</p>
<p>What is advice on use of herbal remedies, food or vitamin supplements to treat COVID-19?</p>	<p>The World Health Organization cautions against physicians and medical associations recommending/administering unproven treatments to patients with COVID-19, or people self-medicating. Although we know more about approved medications currently being used to treat other diseases and their side effects - which helps to speed up approvals and use in other clinical practice when shown to be of benefit - the effectiveness of medicines being trialed for treatment of COVID-19 is not yet established. All drugs have potential side effects and the same drug can work in different ways according to a person's clinical condition and the dose of the drug administered.</p> <p>There is no evidence we are aware of that any herbal remedies, food or vitamin supplements are effective treatments for COVID-19.</p>
<p>What is known about prophylactic treatment for COVID-19?</p>	<p>Current research is focused on identifying effective treatments for severe cases of COVID-19. Potential COVID-19 prophylaxis medicines still need to be trialed even if the drugs are licensed for other uses as we need to understand effectiveness in COVID-19.</p> <p>The vast majority of people who have the virus develop only mild symptoms which resolve without treatment. There is likely to be more research looking into the benefits of preventative or 'prophylactic' treatment for those at highest risk of getting the virus or transmitting it to those who are vulnerable- for example healthcare workers and those caring for older people.</p>