

Review shows chloroquine doesn't help people with COVID-19

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Hydroxychloroquine does not reduce deaths from COVID-19, and probably does not reduce the number of people needing mechanical ventilation, state the authors of a new *Cochrane Review*. In addition, they note that no new trials of hydroxychloroquine or chloroquine for treating COVID-19 should be started.

Authors based in India, South Africa, and the UK (LSTM, the University of Liverpool, Royal Liverpool University Hospital Liverpool) undertook this systematic review of studies that used chloroquine or [hydroxychloroquine](#) for treating or preventing COVID-19 disease. They searched for studies that examined giving chloroquine or hydroxychloroquine to people with COVID-19; people at risk of being exposed to the virus; and people who had been exposed to the virus.

The public demand for a COVID-19 cure fueled speculation that the drug might be effective, but this was based on unreliable research that did not meet the inclusion criteria of this review. The then US President Trump declared chloroquine a "game changer" about a year ago, leading to [global demand](#) and confusion. The [research community](#)

rapidly organized large trials which demonstrated no evidence of effect, and these trials are summarized in this review.

The review authors included 14 relevant studies: 12 studies of chloroquine or hydroxychloroquine used to treat COVID-19 in 8569 adults; and two studies of hydroxychloroquine to stop COVID-19 in 3346 adults who had been exposed to the virus but had no symptoms of infection. Included studies were from China (four); Brazil, Egypt, Iran, Spain, Taiwan, the U.K., and North America (one study each); and a global study in 30 countries (one study). Some studies were partly funded by pharmaceutical companies that manufacture hydroxychloroquine.

Senior author Dr. Tom Fletcher said: "This review certainly should put a line under using this drug to treat COVID-19, but some countries and health providers are still caught up in the earlier hype and prescribing the drug. We hope this review will help these practices end soon."

More information: Bhagteshwar Singh et al. Chloroquine or hydroxychloroquine for prevention and treatment of COVID-19, *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* (2020). [DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD013587](#)

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