

COVID-19: What You Should Know

CURRENT AS OF 04.05.2020 HANA AKSELROD, MD, MPH GW DIVISION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES



Disclosures

- No financial or research conflicts of interest
- At-risk group: clinical medical worker, two-physician household





https://www.christianpost.com/news/christian-group-sends-face-masks-food-to-china-as-coronavirus-death-toll-rises-above-1000.html



https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html



https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/coronavirus-us-cases.html

Italy and Spain's daily death tolls are plateauing, but in the UK and US every day brings more new deaths than the last

Daily deaths with coronavirus (7-day rolling average), by number of days since 3 daily deaths first recorded Stars represent national lockdowns 🚖



Virus Features

- Name: SARS-CoV-2
 - Family: Coronavirus
 - (Influenza: family Orthomyxovirus)
- Origin: bats ± pangolins
- 1 infectious person \rightarrow 3 new cases
 - (Influenza: 1-2 new cases)
- No pre-existing ("herd") immunity
- How it is spread:
 - **Droplets** (coughing, sneezing 6 foot radius)
 - Surfaces (touch)
 - Health care workers: aerosols (procedures)







COVID-19 Disease Features

- Symptoms: fever, cough, shortness of breath
 - Severe disease: Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome

• Symptom severity at diagnosis:

- 80% mild-moderate (recovered at home)
- 15% severe (hospitalized)
- 5% critical (ICU/ventilator)
- Average time from exposure to symptoms: 5 days (range: 2-14)
- Duration of illness: 1-2 weeks if mild, 4-6 if severe
- Virus shedding
 - Highest in early days of illness, continues for 7-12 days
 - Can occur 24-48 hours prior to onset of symptoms

Most At-Risk

- Older Age
- Chronic conditions:
 - High blood pressure
 - Heart or kidney disease
 - Dlabetes
- Immunocompromised conditions
 - Data on 245 cases of COVID-19 reported to CDC
 - Higher risk of hospitalization/ICU

Mortality in USA: 2.6% across all groups

• CDC data current as of 3/31/2020



Testing for COVID-19

- Molecular detection
 - Detects viral RNA
 - Polymerase Chain Reaction
 - CDC \rightarrow state labs \rightarrow academic and commercial labs
 - Most accurate during peak symptoms
- Waiting for: antibody-based detection
 - Less sensitive in early disease (IgM)
 - Can show immunity/recovered status (IgG)





Medical Approaches

1. Making cell less hospitable to virus

- Hydroxychloroquine, azithromycin
- Conflicting data, small studies

2. Interfering with viral replication

- Lopinavir/ritonavir did not work in Chinese trial of 199 patients
- Remdesivir ongoing NIH clinical trials

3. Inhibition of inflammatory cascade

- IL-6 inhibitors (tocilizumab, sarilumab), other monoclonal antibodies
- 4. Mechanical ventilation support
- 5. Passive immunity: Convalescent plasma
- 6. Active immunity: Vaccine development

FDA commissioner warns public against taking 'any form of chloroquine' unless prescribed

Myasthenia gravis due to hydroxychloroquine



S DOI https://doi.org/10.4081/reumatismo.2015.849

Updated 12:50 PM ET, Wed March 25, 2020





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'This Can Happen to You': 29-Year-Old Coronavirus Patient Shares Warning

By Doreen Gentzler and Patricia Fantis • Published March 31, 2020 • Updated on April 1, 2020 at 7:58 am



"Flattening the Curve"



US Health System

SVI SCORE 0 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 1



Source: CDC's Social Vulnerability Index Credit: Ruth Talbot/NPR and Chris Zubak-Skees/Center for Public Integrity





https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2020/04/01/824874977/underlying-health-disparities-could-mean-coronavirus-hits-some-communities-harde

Models and Predictions



Recommendations









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Summary of International COVID-19 Working Group Recommendations

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- No data currently exist on how COVID-19 affects people with myasthenia gravis (MG)/LEMS or patients with other diseases on immunosuppressive therapies.
- There is a theoretical concern that MG/LEMS patients may be at higher risk of developing the infection or experiencing severe manifestations of COVID-19.

Recommendations

The MG expert panel suggests that therapy decisions should be individualized and made collaboratively between the person with MG and his/her healthcare provider. Based on their expert advice, it is suggested that:

- People with MG should follow the corresponding national guidelines and any additional recommendations for people at risk for serious illnesses from COVID-19.
- MG/LEMS patients should continue their current treatment and are advised not to stop any existing medications, unless specifically discussed and approved by their healthcare provider

Recommendations

- no scientific evidence that symptomatic therapies like Pyridostigmine or 3,4 Diaminopyridine increases the risk of infection
- Should practice social distancing, including avoiding public gatherings/crowds, avoiding crowded public transport and where possible use alternatives to face-to-face consultations (eg: telemedicine)
- Consideration of risk regarding travel for treatment or to obtain blood tests for monitoring of treatment needs to be considered

Special Considerations IVIg, Eculizumab, and Plasma Exchange

- No evidence to suggest that intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIG4) or therapeutic plasma exchange (PLEX or TPE) carry any additional risk in catching COVID-19.
- No evidence to support that inhibition of complement using eculizumab increases susceptibility to COVID infection or
- There is the risk of traveling to infusion or exchange center, which now needs to be considered

Special Considerations Rituximab treatment

Before starting a B-cell depleting therapy (rituximab), healthcare providers should consider the risk of worsening myasthenia or crisis and the risk of catching the viral infection. It may be advisable to delay initiation of cell depleting therapies, until the peak of the outbreak is over in their region. However, the risk of not starting the cell depleting therapy in occasional patients may outweigh the risk of severe COVID-19 infection and this has to be discussed with the patient in detail.

Clinical Trial Participants

Any decision regarding ongoing need for in-person evaluations and treatments under the clinical trial be based with consideration for **patients' best interest.** In clinical trials this also has to be discussed and approved by the trial sponsor, institutional review board and medical monitor.

Experimental Treatments for COVID-19

Various medications have been mentioned in the news and social media as being useful to treat COVID-19 (e.g., choloroquine, azithromycin, anti-virals etc), however, these are not proven to be effective or studied systematically at this time. Patients should be aware that some of these medications can potentially worsen MG and should avoid using these without specific medical approval.

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