

COVID-19 Scientific and Public Health Policy Update – (09 June 2020)

In addition to our weekly Outbreak Brief on the spread of COVID-19 and the actions that Africa CDC is taking to help African Union Member States, Africa CDC has begun to share a weekly brief detailing the latest changes in scientific knowledge and public health policy changes, as well as updates to the latest guidance from WHO and others. Contents of this document are not intended to serve as recommendations from the Africa CDC; rather, it is a summary of the fact base to help inform Member States. It is important to note that the outbreak is evolving rapidly and that the nature of this information will continue to change. We will continue to provide regular updates to ensure Member States are informed of the most critical developments in these areas.

A. Executive summary

- The paper: “Hydroxychloroquine or chloroquine with or without a macrolide for treatment of COVID-19: a multinational registry analysis” published in the Lancet has been retracted following questions on the provenance and validity of its data as well as the analytical techniques used.
- A seroprevalence study of 105 healthcare workers (HCWs) exposed to four COVID-19 patients suggests that serological testing is useful for the identification of asymptomatic or subclinical infection of SARS-CoV-2 among close contacts with COVID-19 patients.
- A multicenter randomized control trial of 103 patients with severe or life-threatening COVID-19, reports that convalescent plasma therapy added to standard treatment did not significantly improve the time to clinical improvement.
- A randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial of 821 asymptomatic who were at high-risk exposure to COVID-19 treated with hydroxychloroquine prophylaxis reported that hydroxychloroquine did not prevent COVID-19 when used as post exposure prophylaxis.
- A systematic review and meta-analysis reports that transmission of viruses was lower with physical distancing of 1 metre or more, for SARS-CoV-2 and that face masks were associated with protection in both healthcare and community transmission settings.

B. New guidelines and resources

- Since 30 May 2020, Africa CDC has published new resource on: [Partnership to Accelerate COVID-19 Testing \(PACT\) in Africa](#)
- WHO has published new and updated guidance and resources on: [Maintaining essential health services: operational guidance for the COVID-19 context](#); [Case Report Form for suspected cases of multisystem inflammatory syndrome \(MIS\) in children and adolescents temporally related to COVID-19](#); [Interim guidance for the poliomyelitis \(polio\) surveillance network in the context of coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#); [Digital tools for COVID-19 contact tracing](#); [Log of major changes and errata in WHO daily aggregate case and death count data](#); [Advice on the use of masks in the context of COVID-19](#)
- US CDC has published new and updated guidance and resources on: [Clinical Care Guidance for Healthcare Professionals about Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#); [Investigating a COVID-19 Case](#); [COVID-19 in Newly Resettled Refugee Populations](#); [Notification of Exposure: A Contact Tracer's Guide for COVID-19](#); [Frequently Asked Questions about Biosafety and COVID-19](#); [Protect Yourself When Using Transportation](#); [Clinical Questions about COVID-19: Questions and Answers](#); [Interim Guidance for Collection and Submission of Post-mortem Specimens from Deceased Persons with Known or Suspected COVID-19](#); [Contact Tracing](#); [Interim guidance for Agriculture Workers and Employers](#); [K-12 Schools and Child Care Programs: FAQs for Administrators, Teachers, and Parents](#); [Frequently Asked Questions and Answers: Coronavirus Disease-2019 \(COVID-19\) and Children](#); [COVID-19 in Newly Resettled Refugee Populations](#); [Guidance for Schools and Day Camps](#)
- ECDC has issued new resource on: [Conducting in-action and after-action reviews of the public health response to COVID-19](#)
- FDA has issued new resource on: [Independent Evaluations of COVID-19 Serological Tests](#)
- The full list of latest guidance and resources from WHO and other public health institutions can be found in this [link](#).

C. Scientific updates

Epidemiology

- A seroprevalence study of 105 healthcare workers (HCWs) exposed to four COVID-19 patients suggests that [serological testing is useful for the identification of asymptomatic or subclinical infection of SARS-CoV-2 among close contacts with COVID-19 patients](#).
- The study analysed total of 77,996 people, 3,303 SARS-CoV-2-positive cases using two different PCR systems (Roche LightCycler 480 II and Roche cobas 6800/8800) , [findings suggests that a considerable percentage of infected people in all age groups, including those who are pre- or mild-symptomatic, carry viral loads likely to represent infectivity](#). Infected children may be as likely as adults to transmit SARS-CoV-2. (Not peer-reviewed)

Diagnostics

- A comparative analysis of a rapid immunochromatographic test for the detection of SARS-CoV-2 antigen, [Coris COVID-19 Ag Respi-Strip test and RT-qPCR suggests that an overall poor sensitivity \(30.2%\) of the COVID-19 Ag Respi-Strip](#). Findings suggest that Coris COVID-19 Ag Respi-Strip should not be used alone for COVID-19 diagnosis.
- A multicohort study in Hong Kong compared the seropositivity of the general population of Hong Kong before and after the pandemic had begun, and determined the seropositivity of Hong Kong residents evacuated from Hubei province. [Findings suggests seropositivity rate in Hubei returnees indicates that RT-PCR-confirmed patients only represent a small proportion of the total number of cases. The low seroprevalence suggests that most of the Hong Kong and Hubei population remain susceptible to COVID-19](#). Future waves of the outbreak are inevitable without a vaccine or antiviral prophylaxis.
- A study evaluated the Nucleocapsid and Spike Protein-Based IgG and IgM Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assays (ELISA) for SARS-CoV-2, [results suggest the rN-based and rS-based IgG and IgM ELISA has high sensitivity after 10 days post disease onset](#) and can be an important supplementary method for COVID-19 diagnosis.
- A study reports on the use of the SARS-CoV-2 IgM colloidal gold immunochromatographic assay (GICA) for clinical diagnosis. [Results indicate GICA detected 82.2% \(37/45\) of RT-qPCR confirmed COVID-19 cases and can be a useful test to complement existing PCR-based assays for confirmation of COVID-19](#).

Care and Treatment

- A multicenter randomized control trial of 103 patients with severe or life-threatening COVID-19, [reports that convalescent plasma therapy added to standard treatment did not significantly improve the time to clinical improvement within 28 days](#). It should also be noted that the study was terminated early and may have been underpowered to detect a clinically important difference.
- A randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial of 821 asymptomatic who were at high-risk or moderate-risk of exposure to COVID-19 were treated with hydroxychloroquine as postexposure prophylaxis. There was no significant difference in incidence between the hydroxychloroquine-treated and placebo groups. [Findings suggest that hydroxychloroquine did not prevent COVID-19 when used as postexposure prophylaxis within 4 days after exposure](#).
- A study reports on the [efficacy of Riboflavin + UV light in reducing SARS-CoV-2 infectivity when tested in human plasma and whole blood products](#). Results indicate Riboflavin and UV light effectively reduce the titre of SARS-CoV-2 to the limit of detection in human plasma and pathogen-reduced blood products may be a safer option for critically ill patients with COVID-19, particularly those in high-risk categories.
- “Hydroxychloroquine or chloroquine with or without a macrolide for treatment of COVID-19: a multinational registry analysis” [published in the Lancet has been retracted](#) following questions on the provenance and validity of its data as well as the analytical techniques used.

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- A team of researchers from the pharmaceutical organization, the SEEK Group, Guy's Hospital, King's College London, and St. Thomas' Hospital in London have launched a trial [LIBERATE, aimed to evaluate the reduction in severity and progression of lung injury with three doses of lipid ibuprofen in patients with SARS-CoV-2 infections.](#)
- Eli Lilly and AbCellera have announced the [launch of the first human study testing its investigational COVID-19 antibody treatment, LY-CoV555](#), in major medical centres across the United States.

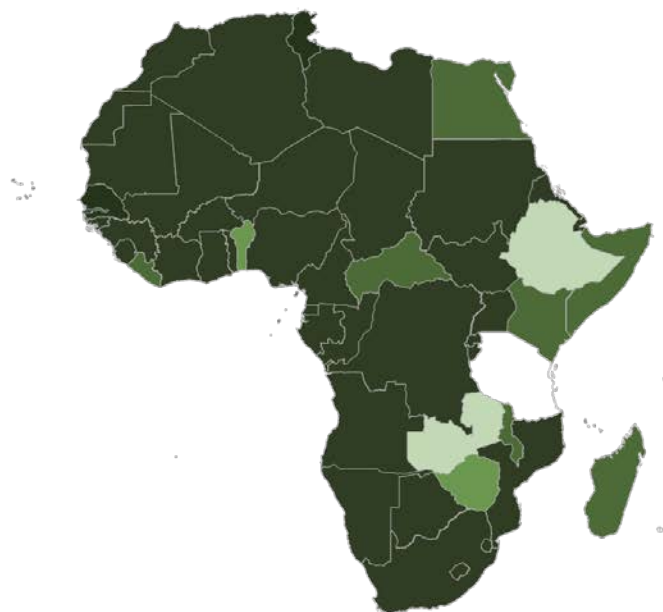
Others

- A systematic review and meta-analysis of 172 observational and 44 comparative studies reports that [transmission of viruses was lower with physical distancing of 1 metre or more, for SARS-CoV-2 and the betacoronaviruses.](#) Findings also suggest that face masks use particularly N95, was associated with protection in both healthcare and community transmission settings.
- A mathematical modelling study demonstrates that a [strategic social network-based reduction of contact strongly enhances the effectiveness of social distancing measures while keeping risks lower.](#) The study provides a scientific evidence for effective social distancing that can be applied in public health messaging and that can mitigate negative consequences of social isolation.

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E. Summary of travel restrictions implemented by Member States

Contents of this section include only publicly announced public health policies. Sources of this section include official government communique, embassy alerts and press search.

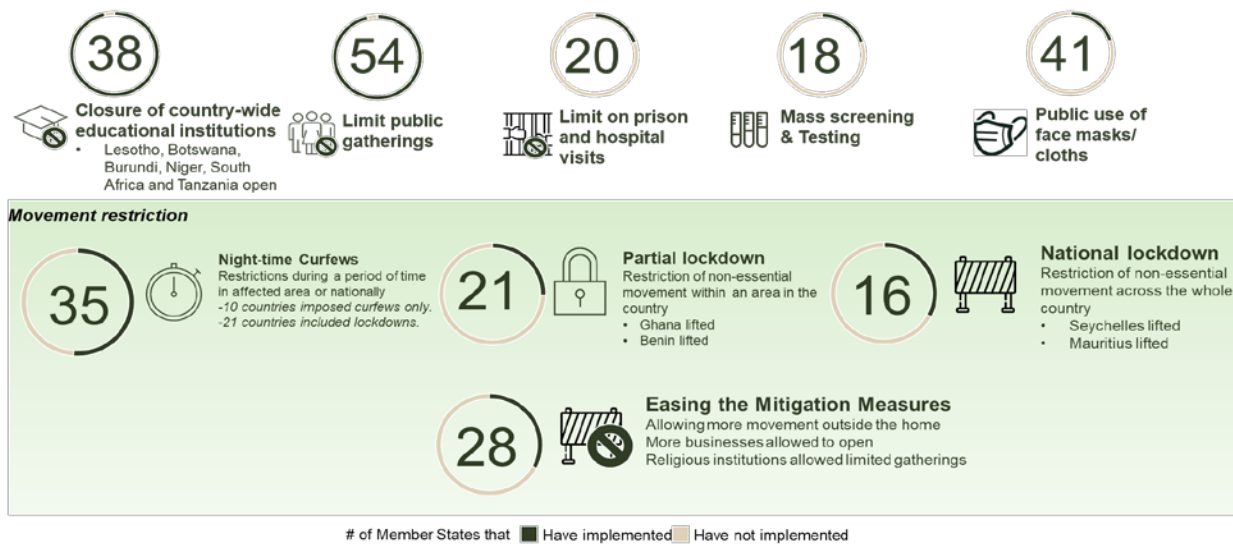


- 1 Some countries still allow cargo, freight and emergency transport into and out of the country; Some MSs will still allow citizens and residents to enter but all borders are essentially closed
- 2 Banning entry or exit of citizens or suspending visa issuance to specific countries

For further detailed information for each country, refer to the full table [here](#).

F. Summary of physical distancing measures taken by Member States

Contents of this section include only publicly announced public health policies. Sources of this section include official government communique and press search. (as of 07 June 2020)



*Source of information based on official reports, embassy alerts and press scanning

For further detailed information for each country, refer to the full table [here](#)

G. Clinical Trials for COVID-19

As of 29th May 2020, there were 41 clinical trials registered in Africa.

Key updates:

- On 18 May 2020, the NIH led [Accelerating COVID-19 Therapeutic Interventions and Vaccines \(ACTIV\)](#) initiative was announced. ACTIV brings together biopharmaceutical companies, the Health and Human Services Office of the US Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, US CDC, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the European Medicines Agency to streamline clinical trials, coordinating regulatory processes and leverage assets to rapidly respond to the COVID-19.
- On 25 May 2020 the Executive group of the WHO led SOLIDARITY trial [announced a temporary pause of the hydroxychloroquine \(HCQ\) arm](#) within the trial while the safety data is reviewed by the Data Safety Monitoring Board and to review a comprehensive analysis and critical appraisal of all evidence available globally.
- On 27 May 2020, [WHO vaccine candidates landscape](#) was updated: 10 candidate vaccines are at the clinical evaluation stage (phase I and II) and 115 candidates at the preclinical stage. In Africa, the Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI), in Kilifi, Kenya has announced the [phase I/II clinical trial to determine the safety, immunogenicity and efficacy of the candidate COVID-19 vaccine ChAdOx1 nCoV-19](#), developed by the University of Oxford, among 400 adults aged ≥ 18 years.
- On 28 May 2020, WHO published the [Guidance for research ethics committees for rapid review of research during public health emergencies](#).
- On 20 May 2020, WHO Director General and the President of Costa Rica announced the [Solidarity Call to Action To realize equitable global access to COVID-19 health technologies through pooling of knowledge, intellectual property and data](#). In Africa, Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe indicated that they were joining this call to action.

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List of registered interventional clinical trials in Africa

Location	Title	Interventions	Sponsor/Collaborators	Phases	Enrolment target	Start date
Egypt	Efficacy of Faviprevir in COVID-19 Treatment	Drug: Favipiravir Drug: Placebos	Tanta University	II/III	40	17 April 2020
	Angiotensin Converting Enzyme Inhibitors in Treatment of COVID-19	Drug: ACEIs Drug: Conventional treatment	Tanta University	III	60	15 April 2020
	A Real-life Experience on Treatment of Patients with COVID-19	Drug: Chloroquine Drug: Favipiravir Drug: Nitazoxanide Drug: Ivermectin Drug: Niclosamide	Tanta University	II/III	100	15 April 2020
	The Efficacy of Ivermectin and Nitazoxanide in COVID-19 Treatment	Drug: Chloroquine Drug: Nitazoxanide Drug: Ivermectin	Tanta University	II/III	60	17 April 2020
	Efficacy of Natural Honey Treatment in Patients with Novel Coronavirus	Dietary Supplement: Natural Honey Other: Standard Care	Misr University for Science and Technology	III	1000	25 March 2020
	Administration of Chlorpromazine as a Treatment for COVID-19	Drug: Chlorpromazine Injection	Cairo University	I/II	60	01 May 2020
	PRA-001 Plasma Rich Antibodies From Recovered Patients From COVID-19	Other: Antibody-Rich Plasma from COVID-19 recovered patients	Ain Shams University	NA	20	20 April 2020

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	FAV-001 Efficacy and Safety of Favipiravir in Management of COVID-19	Drug: favipiravir Drug: Standard of care therapy	Ain Shams University	III	100	20 April 2020
	Levamisole and Isoprinosine in Immune-prophylaxis of Egyptian Healthcare Workers Facing COVID-19	Drug: Levamisole Drug: Isoprinosine Drug: Levamisole and Isoprinosine	Ain Shams University	III	100	20 April 2020
	Application of BCG Vaccine for Immune-prophylaxis Among Egyptian Healthcare Workers During the Pandemic of COVID-19	Biological: intradermal injection of BCG Vaccine Other: placebo	Ain Shams University	III	900	20 April 2020
	Efficacy of Chloroquine in COVID-19 Treatment	Drug: Chloroquine	Tanta University	II/III	40	17 April 2020
	Isotretinoin Assessment the Activity Value of 13- Cis-Retinoic Acid(Isotretinoin) in the Treatment of COVID-19	Drug: Isotretinoin (13 cis retinoic acid) capsules+standard treatment Drug: Standard treatment	Kafrelsheikh University	III	45	01 April 2020
	MV-COVID19 Measles Vaccine in HCW	Drug: Measles-Mumps-Rubella Vaccine	Kasr El Aini Hospital	III	200	01 May 2020
	Management of COVID-19 Patients During Home Isolation	Device: Oxygen Therapy Procedure: Physical Therapy	Cairo University	NA	60	15 March 2020
	COVID-19 Exchange Transfusion Versus Plasma From Convalescent Patients With Methylene Blue in Patients With COVID-19	Biological: exchange blood transfusion from normal donor Biological: plasma from convalescent patients with COVID-19 Drug: Methylene Blue 5 MG/ML	Ain Shams University	II	15	05 May 2020

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Inhalable Sodium Bicarbonate: A Possible Adjuvant Treatment of Patients with Novel COVID-19	Drug: Sodium Bicarbonate	Mansoura University	Early I	20	01 April 2020
COVID-19 Unplanned Shifting to Online Distance Learning: Nursing Students' Perception and Achievement	Other: implementing Online Distance Learning	Kasr El Aini Hospital	NA	180	01 Feb 2020
SnPPIX Efficacy of Sn-protoporphyrin IX (SnPPIX) and Sulfonatoporphyrin(TPPS)Against COVID-19	Drug: SnPP Protoporphyrin Drug: Sulfonatoporphyrin (TPPS)	Kafrelsheikh University	I	56	01 May 2020
SCOPE Silymarin in COVID-19 Pneumonia	Drug: Silymarin Drug: Placebo	Cairo University	III	50	01 June 2020
New Antiviral Drugs for Treatment of COVID-19	Drug: Nitazoxanide, Ribavirin and Ivermectin	Mansoura University	III	100	May 2020
Ivermectin and Doxycycline in COVID-19 Treatment	Drug: Ivermectin Drug: Doxycycline Drug: Chloroquine	Tanta University	II/III	40	01 June 2020
Using PRP and Cord Blood in Treatment of Covid -19	Combination Product: stem cells	Aljazeera Hospital	NA	100	25 May 2020
Folic acid: A new suggested prevention and treatment of COVID-19 infection	Drug: folic acid Other: standard care	Faculty of Medicine Cairo university	II	60	20 April 2020

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Ghana	PROTECT Sur Preventing Pulmonary Complications in Surgical Patients at Risk of COVID-19	Drug: Hydroxychloroquine Drug: Lopinavir/Ritonavir Drug: Hydroxychloroquine + Lopinavir/Ritonavir Drug: standard of care	National Institute of Health Research, UK University for Development Studies School of Medicine and Health Sciences Tamale Teaching Hospital	III	6,400	25 April 2020
Kenya	A study to determine if a new COVID-19 vaccine safely generates protective immune responses in adults in Kenya	Single dose of ChAdOx1 nCoV-19 vaccine Vs Verorab (rabies vaccine)	University of Oxford	I/II	400	31 May 2020
Nigeria	LACCT Lagos COVID-19 Chloroquine Treatment Trial	Drug: Chloroquine phosphate Drug: Hydroxychloroquine sulphate	Lagos State Government Nigerian Institute of Medical Research	NA	600	17 April 2020
	CRASH-19 Coronavirus Response - Active Support for Hospitalised COVID-19 Patients	Drug: Aspirin Drug: Losartan Drug: Simvastatin	London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine	III	10,000	01 April 2020
	IHP Detox tea trial Efficacy and safety of IHP Detox Tea for treatment of Corona virus disease 2019: a pilot placebo-controlled randomized trial	IHP Detox Tea (a special blend of <i>Andrographis paniculata</i> , <i>Garcinia kola</i> and <i>Psidium guajava</i>)	Neimeth International Pharmaceuticals Plc	NA	72	01 May 2020
	IVERCOVID Does ivermectin cure and/or prevent COVID-19?	Drug: ivermectin 6 mg Drug: ivermectin 12 mg Drug: placebo	Lagos University Teaching Hospital	III	45	23 April 2020

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Senegal	SEN-CoV-Fadj Efficacy and Safety Evaluation of Treatment Regimens in Adult COVID-19 Patients in Senegal	Drug: Hydroxychloroquine Drug: Hydroxychloroquine + Azithromycin	Institut Pasteur de Dakar Fann Hospital, Senegal Ministry of Health, Senegal Diamniadio Children Hospital, Senegal Dalal Jamm Hospital, Senegal Epicentre, Paris, France	III	258	01 June 2020
	ESHAZ Trial Hydroxychloroquine, Azithromycine and Zinc for the treatment of SARS-Cov2 infection in Senegal. COVID-19	Drug: Hydrochloroquine 600 mg plus Azythromycine Drug: Hydrochloroquine 400 mg plus Azythromycine Drug: Zinc	Faculty of Medicine University Cheikh Anta Diop of Dakar Senegal.	III	384	01 June 2020
South Sudan	GA&COVID19 Potential Role of Gum Arabic as Immunomodulatory Agent Among COVID-19 Patients	Dietary Supplement: Acacia Senegal Dietary Supplement: Pectin	Al-Neelain University University of Khartoum	II/III	110	01 June 2020
South Africa	CQOTE Chloroquine Outpatient Treatment Evaluation for HIV-COVID-19	Drug: Chloroquine or hydroxychloroquine	University of Cape Town	III	560	01 May 2020
	BCG Vaccination for Healthcare Workers in COVID-19 Pandemic	Biological: Bacille Calmette-Guerin (BCG) Other: Placebo Comparator	TASK Applied Science (University of Cape Town)	III	500	04 May 2020
Tunisia	COVID_2Pro Assessment of the Efficacy and Safety of (HCQ) as a Prophylaxis for COVID-19 for Health Professionals	Drug: Hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) Drug: Placebo oral tablet	Abderrahmane Mami Hospital Eshmoun Clinical Research Centre	III	530	15 April 2020

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	<p>COVID+PA Assessment of Efficacy and Safety of HCQ and Antibiotics Administrated to Patients COVID19(+)</p>	<p>Drug: Hydroxychloroquine Drug: Azithromycin</p>	<p>Abderrahmane Mami Hospital Eshmoun Clinical Research Centre</p>	<p>IV</p>	<p>400</p>	<p>15 April 2020</p>
	<p>TRONCHER Assessment of Efficacy and Safety of Tocilizumab Compared to Deferoxamine, Associated With Standards Treatments in COVID-19 (+) Patients Hospitalized In Intensive Care in Tunisia</p>	<p>Drug: Tocilizumab Injection Drug: Deferoxamine</p>	<p>Abderrahmane Mami Hospital Eshmoun Clinical Research Centre Datamatrix</p>	<p>III</p>	<p>260</p>	<p>04 May 2020</p>
	<p>COVID-Milit A Study of Hydroxychloroquine and Zinc in the Prevention of COVID-19 Infection in Military Healthcare Workers</p>	<p>Drug: Hydroxychloroquine Drug: Hydroxychloroquine (placebo) Drug: Zinc Drug: Zinc (Placebo)</p>	<p>Military Hospital of Tunis UR17DN02 : Autoimmune Diseases Research Unit Dacima Consulting</p>	<p>III</p>	<p>660</p>	<p>04 May 2020</p>
	<p>Hydroxychloroquine and Nitazoxanide Combination Therapy for COVID-19</p>	<p>Combination Product: Hydroxychloroquine plus Nitazoxanide Other: Standard care</p>	<p>Tanta University</p>	<p>II/III</p>	<p>100</p>	<p>May 2020</p>
<p>Kenya and South Africa</p>	<p>SOLIDARITY Public health emergency SOLIDARITY trial of treatments for COVID-19 infection in hospitalized patients</p>	<p>1. Local standard of care alone OR local standard of care plus one of 2. Remdesivir 3. Chloroquine or hydroxychloroquine 4. Lopinavir + ritonavir 5. Lopinavir + ritonavir plus interferon-beta</p>	<p>WHO</p>	<p>III</p>	<p>10,000</p>	<p>01 March 2020</p>
<p>Cameroon, Ghana, Uganda, South Africa, Zambia and</p>	<p>CROWN CORONATION: Chloroquine Repurposing to healthWorkers for Novel CORONAVirus mitigaTION</p>	<p>Drug: Low-dose chloroquine/hydroxychloroquine Drug: Mid dose chloroquine or hydroxychloroquine Drug: High dose chloroquine or hydroxychloroquine Drug: Placebo</p>	<p>Washington University School of Medicine Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation</p>	<p>III</p>	<p>55,000</p>	<p>01 April 2020</p>

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Zimbabwe						
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