

Joint WHO AFRO and Africa CDC Statement on the Use of Corticosteroid for the Management of Severe and Critical COVID-19 Cases

The first WHO interim guidance for the management of patients with COVID-19 was published in March 2020. The guidance was recently updated and republished in May 2020. In June 2020, following the announcement of findings from the RECOVERY trial that severe/critical COVID-19 cases benefit from Dexamethasone, Africa CDC released a statement that encourages Member States to review their standard of care accordingly. The WHO guideline on the therapeutic benefits of corticosteroids in COVID-19 patients (described as a living guidance) was published on 2 September 2020 following positive findings from recent studies.

The Living Guidance on Corticosteroid and COVID-19 considered evidence from eight clinical trials: RECOVERY and seven prospective meta-analysis on corticosteroids and critically ill (WHO REACT) COVID-19 patients. The development of this guideline followed the GRADE (Grading of Recommendations, Assessment, Development and Evaluations) process of making clinical practice recommendation through synthesis of evidence from structured and transparent evaluation of relevant research findings.

This statement aims to provide a summarized guide to health workers managing COVID-19 patients. It, however, is not intended to replace clinical judgement and context. The full guidance can be accessed at: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-Corticosteroids-2020.1>

Major Recommendations

- ▶ Systemic (i.e. intravenous or oral) corticosteroid therapy (e.g. 6 mg of dexamethasone orally or intravenously daily or 50 mg of hydrocortisone intravenously every 8 hours) for 7 to 10 days in patients with severe or critical COVID-19.
- ▶ Conditional recommendation not to use corticosteroid therapy for patients with mild to moderate COVID-19.

For Additional information

1. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/clinical-management-of-covid-19>
2. <https://www.bmj.com/content/370/bmj.m3379>
3. https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2770279?guestAccessKey=ec87204d-c42d-4d34-bef5-077a40bc86b0&utm_source=For_The_Media&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=ftm_links&utm_content=tf1&utm_term=090220&apld=scweb
4. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2770278>
5. https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/10.1001/jama.2020.17022?guestAccessKey=23fa39bc-68d3-4d4a-88ef-37c908849a05&utm_source=For_The_Media&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=ftm_links&utm_content=tf1&utm_term=090220
6. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2770276>
7. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2770277>
8. <https://africacdc.org/download/statement-on-the-use-of-dexamethasone-for-severely-ill-covid-19-patients/>