Updates and Controversies in COVID

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Publications since Last Session

Weekly Publications
Daily coronavirus cases in the U.S. fall below 50,000 for seven straight days after summer surge

Grim Milestone

NY coronavirus testing hits record low for positive cases, Cuomo says

Alabama posts lowest coronavirus numbers in months: Week in review

California coronavirus case average, hospitalizations reach seven-week low

Coronavirus update: Infections are trending upward in the Midwest
Variant of SARS-CoV-2 with clinical implications?

Effects of a major deletion in the SARS-CoV-2 genome on the severity of infection and the inflammatory response: an observational cohort study


- Investigating SARS-CoV-2 variant with 382-nucleotide deletion
- Patients with Δ382 variant appeared to have a milder clinical course. Δ382 variant was associated with a lower odds of developing hypoxemic respiratory failure, in comparison to wild-type virus or mix
Upcoming diagnostic tests to look forward to!

- FDA issued EUA for
  - Yale’s Saliva Direct COVID-19 diagnostic test
  - LumiraDX UK Ltd.’s SARS-CoV-2 Ag test and authorized its use in laboratories under the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments and in clinical settings under CLIA Certificate of Waiver, Certificate of Compliance, or Certificate of Accreditation.

ESPN
Saliva-based coronavirus test funded by NBA, NBPA gets emergency authorization from FDA

CNBC
Dr. Scott Gottlieb: Yale’s new saliva coronavirus test funded by NBA could be widely rolled out
What about convalescent plasma as a therapy?

NPR

FDA Hesitates On COVID Blood Plasma Treatment

- FDA hesitates but finally issued EUA for convalescent plasma as a COVID-targeted treatment

  Effect of Convalescent Plasma on Mortality among Hospitalized Patients with COVID-19: Initial Three-Month Experience

- While preliminary results suggest a lower mortality in hospitalized patients when administered within 3 days of diagnosis, this trial was performed without a standard treatment group or placebo group, as a point of comparison
FDA and the Federal Trade Commission issued joint warning letters to:

- SilveryGuy for promoting the sale of Colloidal Silver products with misleading claims that products can prevent or treat COVID-19
- Living Senior, LLC for selling cannabidiol products with misleading claims that the products can prevent or treat COVID-19
- Predictive Biotech, Inc. for marketing CoreCyte (unapproved umbilical cord-derived product) claiming to prevent or treat COVID-19

**How do we mitigate misinformation about therapies?**

We are following **21 coronavirus treatments** for effectiveness and safety:

- **2** Widely used
- **2** Promising evidence
- **12** Tentative or mixed evidence
- **2** Not promising
- **3** Pseudoscience or fraud

**Perspective Piece**

How Do We Combat Bogus Medicines in the Age of the COVID-19 Pandemic?

Wubshet Tesfaye, Solomon Abrha, Mahipal Sinnollareddy, Bruce Arnold, Andrew Brown, Cynthia Matthew, Victor M. Oguoma, Gregory M. Peterson, and Jackson Thomas
Scientific community’s effort to develop a vaccine may be hindered by public’s perception of safety and overall vaccine hesitancy. We need to foster an environment of trust between medical community and society.

8 Vaccines in Phase 3 including mRNA vaccines

2 Vaccines Approved

- Russian Gamelaya Research Institute’s Sputnik V vaccine (Gam-COVID-Vac) has been approved for early use. There is concern that the vaccine has not yet entered Phase 3 clinical trials

- Chinese CanSino Biologics’s vaccine Ad5 has been approved for limited use
Racial Disparities in Clinic Trials

Greater risk of severe COVID-19 in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic populations is not explained by cardiometabolic, socioeconomic or behavioural factors, or by 25(OH)-vitamin D status: study of 1326 cases from the UK Biobank

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Studies have shown disproportionately higher rates of COVID-19 infection, hospitalization, and death in minority groups

Underrepresentation of minority groups in COVID-19 clinical trials may stem from a number of reasons including medical distrust from minority communities, limited accessibility, hidden costs, poor health literacy, implicit biases, etc
What to expect when influenza season arrives?

**What Happens When COVID-19 Collides With Flu Season?**

Rita Rubin, MA

*JAMA.* Published online August 20, 2020. doi:10.1001/jama.2020.15260

NSSP: Percentage of Visits for Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) and COVID-19-Like Illness (CLI) to Emergency Departments, Weekly National Summary, September 29, 2019 - August 15, 2020

- Percentages of visits for COVID-19-like illnesses and influenza-like illnesses have decreased
- While the percentage of visits for ILI have decreased, it is higher than expected for this time of the year
COVID-19 pandemic has led to the rapid advancement of telemedicine

A significant portion of patients may meet criteria for “telemedicine unreadiness”. These vulnerable patients include the elderly and less educated with low literacy levels. Some even lack access to computers with high-speed internet or smartphones with wireless data.

If a telemedicine visit is feasible, simple measures can be used to optimize the encounter including patient’s preference for phone/computer interface, use of video when possible, speaking slowly and clearly, summarizing, etc.
Expert Discussants