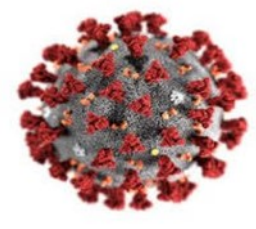




# Issue Brief:

## Treatment of COVID-19



Prepared by: Knowledge Translation Directorate, EPHI (5<sup>th</sup> May 2020)

### Background:

The world is now desperate to find ways to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus and to find effective treatments. To date, there are more than 200 clinical trials of COVID-19 treatments or vaccines that are either ongoing or recruiting patients. New ones are being added every day. The drugs being tested range from repurposed flu treatments to failed ebola drugs, to malaria treatments that were first developed decades ago.

### Findings

- ◇ Apart from studies showing promising results, there are no specific vaccines or medicines for COVID-19 as of this time.
- ◇ Numerous collaborative efforts to discover and evaluate effectiveness of antivirals, immunotherapies, monoclonal antibodies, and vaccines have rapidly emerged.
- ◇ Early reports from China and France suggested that patients with severe symptoms of COVID-19 improved more quickly when given chloroquine or hydroxychloroquine. Some doctors were using a combination of hydroxychloroquine and azithromycin with some positive effects. However, the most recent human studies suggest no benefit — and possibly a higher risk of death due to lethal heart rhythm abnormalities- with both hydroxychloroquine and azithromycin used alone. The drugs are especially dangerous when used in combination.
- ◇ A combination of antiviral treatments, such as lopinavir/ritonavir, litonavir, Fabiravir, ribavirin, Baricitinib and interferon- $\beta$  are newly identified treatments of COVID-19 at an invitro level. Beside in-vitro level testing, combination of lopinavir/ritonavir was tested in a single patient in South Korea, the result indicating the decrease in viral level after the first dose administration of the medication.
- ◇ Remdesivir appears to be effective in the laboratory dish, in protecting cells against infection by the COVID virus (as is true of the SARS and MERS coronaviruses), but more studies are underway to confirm that this is true.

### Priority Actions

There are no drugs or other therapeutics presently approved to prevent or treat COVID-19 as of this time but three following clinical managements should be considered ;

**1** Infection prevention and control measures

**2** Supportive care, including supplemental oxygen and mechanical ventilator support when indicated.

#### \* Self care

- ⇒ If you feel sick you should rest, drink plenty of fluid, and eat nutritious food. Stay in a separate room from other family members, and use a dedicated bathroom if possible. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- ⇒ Everyone should keep a healthy lifestyle at home. Maintain a healthy diet, sleep, stay active, and make social contact with loved ones through the phone or internet. Children need extra love and attention from adults during difficult times.

#### \* Medical treatments

- ⇒ If you have mild symptoms and are otherwise healthy, self-isolate and contact your medical provider or a COVID-19 information line for advice.
- ⇒ Seek medical care if you have a fever, a cough, and difficulty breathing. Call in advance to the call center 8335/952 or call center at your region.
- ⇒ If stress is affecting your daily life after several days, contact your doctor. He or she may suggest that you talk to a mental health professional.

References used in this issue brief are found in the rapid evidence synthesis on: *“Rapid Evidence Synthesis on COVID-19 Pandemic to inform the Ethiopian Ministry of Health”*

Contact:  
KT Directorate, EPHI  
Email: ktdephi@gmail.com  
Tel: +251 911988638