

Does hydroxychloroquine prevent the transmission of covid-19?

The covid-19 pandemic has negatively impacted global health and has caused more than 45 000 deaths. Some possible treatments are being tested in randomised trials. Recently, news that chloroquine/hydroxychloroquine has been successfully used to treat pneumonia associated with covid-19 in reports from China and Europe, associated with the panic of transmission has led to a high public demand for these medications in some countries.^{1 2}

Chloroquine has been known since 1934. Its immunomodulatory properties have led to its use as a potential antiviral therapy.³ Gautret *et al* reported a series of patients infected with covid-19, in whom the combined use of hydroxychloroquine and azithromycin resulted in lower viral load and negative PCR results in nasopharyngeal samples.⁴

However, the results of studies with a higher level of evidence have not been published, and researchers from affected areas/countries could report whether patients with chronic use of chloroquine or hydroxychloroquine for systemic lupus erythematosus and other indications were or not infected by covid-19. If they were infected, how is the clinical course in those patients also deserves attention.

Hopefully, based on an observational study, a hypothesis that chloroquine is effective in preventing the transmission of this virus could be formulated and many lives and costs can be positively impacted if we know about this possible prophylaxis option.

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