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Colchicine reduces the risk of COVID-19-related complications

January 23, 2021

Positive results from COLCORONA trial show that colchicine is the only effective oral medication for treating non-hospitalized patients

MONTREAL, January 22, 2021 – The Montreal Heart Institute (MHI) announced today that the COLCORONA clinical trial has provided clinically persuasive results of colchicine’s efficacy to treat COVID-19. The study results have shown that colchicine has reduced by 21% the risk of death or hospitalizations in patients with COVID-19 compared to placebo. This result obtained for the global study population of 4488 patients approached statistical significance. The analysis of the 4159 patients in whom the diagnosis of COVID-19 was proven by a naso-pharyngeal PCR test has shown that the use of colchicine was associated with statistically significant reductions in the risk of death or hospitalization compared to placebo. In these patients with a proven diagnosis of COVID-19, colchicine reduced hospitalizations by 25%, the need for mechanical ventilation by 50%, and deaths by 44%. This major scientific discovery makes colchicine the world’s first oral drug that could be used to treat non-hospitalized patients with COVID-19.

“Our research shows the efficacy of colchicine treatment in preventing the ‘cytokine storm’ phenomenon and reducing the complications associated with COVID-19,” said Dr. Jean-Claude Tardif, Director of the MHI Research Center, Professor of Medicine at the Université de Montréal and Principal Investigator of the COLCORONA trial. “We are pleased to offer the first oral medication in the world whose use could have a significant impact on public health and potentially prevent COVID-19 complications for millions of patients.”

Treating patients at risk of complications with colchicine as soon as the diagnosis of COVID-19 is confirmed by PCR reduces their risk of developing a severe form of the disease and, consequently, reduces the number of hospitalizations. Prescribing colchicine to patients could help alleviate the problems of hospital congestion and reduce healthcare costs here and around the world.

“Our innovative research program also proves that the Montreal Heart Institute can make rapid scientific breakthroughs in a way that is economically viable for patients by repurposing existing drugs,” continued Dr. Jean-Claude Tardif.

COLCORONA is a contact-less, randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial that took place at home. It has been conducted in Canada, the United States, Europe, South America and South Africa. It was designed to determine whether colchicine could reduce the risk of severe complications associated with COVID-19. COLCORONA was conducted among approximately 4,500 COVID-19 patients not hospitalized at the time of enrollment, with at least one risk factor for COVID-19 complications. This is the world’s largest study testing an orally administered drug in non-hospitalized patients with COVID-19.

COLCORONA was coordinated by the Montreal Heart Institute’s Montreal Health Innovations Coordinating Center (MHICC), and funded by the Government of Quebec, the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute of the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH), Montreal philanthropist Sophie Desmarais, and the COVID-19 Therapeutics Accelerator, an initiative launched by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Wellcome and Mastercard. CGI, Dacima and Pharmascience of Montreal were also collaborators in the trial.

The Montreal Heart Institute and its global partners would like to warmly thank the participants and researchers for their collaboration in the COLCORONA clinical trial.

For more information, visit colcorona.net.

About the Montreal Heart Institute

Founded in 1954, the Montreal Heart Institute constantly aims for the highest standards of excellence in the cardiovascular field through its leadership in clinical and basic research, ultra-specialized care, professional training, and prevention. It houses the largest research center in Canada, the largest cardiovascular prevention center in the country, and the largest cardiovascular genetics center in Canada. The Institute is affiliated with the Université de Montréal and has more than 2,000 employees, including 245 doctors and more than 85 researchers. icm-mhi.org

About the Montreal Health Innovations Coordinating Center (MHICC)

The Montreal Health Innovations Coordinating Center (MHICC) is a leading academic clinical research organization and an integral part of the Montreal Heart Institute (MHI). The MHICC possesses an established network of collaborators in over 4,500 clinical sites in more than 35 countries. It has specific expertise in precision medicine, low-cost high-quality clinical trials, and drug repurposing. mhicc.org

About Pharmascience

Founded in 1983, Pharmascience Inc. is the largest pharmaceutical employer in Quebec. With its head office located in Montreal and its 1,500 employees, Pharmascience Inc. is a private pharmaceutical company with deep roots in Canada, and whose global reach spans across more than 60 countries. Ranked 47th among the top 100 Canadian investors in Research and Development (R&D), thanks to \$49,5 million investment in 2018, Pharmascience Inc. is one of the largest manufacturer of generic drugs in the country. pharmascience.com

About CGI

Founded in 1976, CGI is one of the world's largest information technology (IT) and management consulting firms. From hundreds of locations around the world, CGI offers a complete portfolio of services and solutions: strategic IT and management consulting services, systems integration services, intellectual property solutions as well as IT and business process management services in delegated mode. cgi.com/canada

About Dacima

Founded in 2006, Dacima Software Inc. is a leading innovator in Electronic Data Capture (EDC) software for clinical research. Dacima's EDC software, Dacima Clinical Suite, is a fully feature EDC software application with integrated modules for patient randomization (IWRS), supply management, ePRO, eDiary, medical coding and eConsent. Dacima's flexible and highly configurable EDC platforms allow for the design of all types of study designs including clinical trials, patient registries, observational studies and web surveys through an intuitive user-friendly web interface. dacimasoftware.com

About the COVID-19 Therapeutics Accelerator

The Therapeutics Accelerator is an initiative launched by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Wellcome, and Mastercard with support from public and philanthropic donors to speed up the response to the COVID-19 pandemic by identifying, assessing, developing, and scaling up treatments. Its partners are committed to equitable access, including making products available and affordable in low-resource settings. <https://www.therapeuticsaccelerator.org/>

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