ANTICOV: Initiating a platform adaptive trial for COVID outpatients in Africa

Matangila JR[1] for the ANTICOV Consortium

[1]Clinique Ngaliema; Département de Médecine Tropicale, Université de Kinshasa, DR Congo

Introduction

Early evidence on mortality and ICU intervention rates for SARS-CoV-2 patients, and modelling of COVID in Africa, prompted calls for treatment to prevent progression of mild/moderate COVID.

WHO's SOLIDARITY trial aimed to prevent death in hospitalised patients, and other studies looked at prevention. However, there were no large trials looking at preventing progression and hospitalisation in patients with mild or moderate COVID, and more specifically, in low- and middle-income countries.

The challenge was to rapidly join forces to conduct a large, flexible study to identify safe and effective treatments for outpatients, to minimize the need for hospitalisation in resource-constrained settings worldwide.

Methods

African research institutions already connected with or leading national COVID responses partnered with additional scientific institutions to form the ANTICOV Consortium.

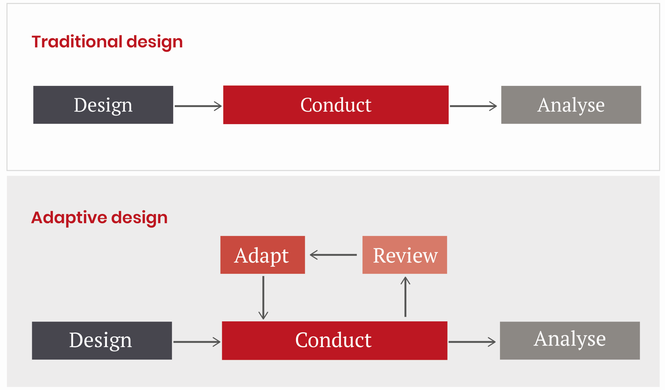
The consortium developed a target product profile and clinical protocol to allow per-country adaptation while maintaining key common features.

ANTICOV is an open-label, randomised, comparative, adaptive platform clinical trial that will test the safety and efficacy of treatments, in 13 African countries, for up to 3000 patients with mild/moderate SARS-CoV-2 infection and symptoms up to 7 days before randomization.

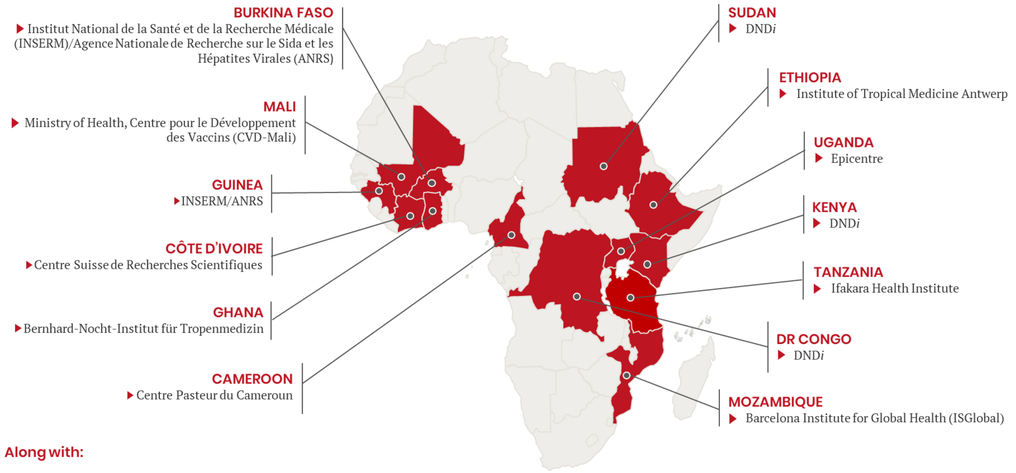
Study arms may be: added when data on promising new drug candidates or combinations become available; removed due to negative results; or interrupted if a treatment shows positive results. ANTICOV allows for the evaluation of multiple therapies, individually or in combination.

Treatment arms thus far include nitazoxanide/inhaled ciclesonide, ASAQ/ivermectin, and – pending approval of a recent amendment – fluoxetine/inhaled budesonide. Ancillary studies addressing Immunological and epidemiological questions are being conducted in a subset of countries.

Adaptive design allows adjustments based on trial data without undermining trial validity and integrity



Participating countries & consortium partners



Along with:

- Alliance for International Medical Action (ALIMA)
- Bahir Dar University
- Centro de Investigação e Treino em Saúde da Polana Caniço, Instituto Nacional de Saúde (CISPOC)
- Centro de Investigação em Saúde de Manhiça (CISM)
- Centre for Research in Therapeutic Sciences (CREATES)
- Centre Muraz, Institut National de Santé Publique
- FIND, the global alliance for diagnostics
- Infectious Diseases Data Observatory (IDDO)
- Institut National de Recherche Biomédicale (INRB)
- Institute of Endemic Diseases, University of Khartoum (IEND)
- Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI)
- Kumasi Centre for Collaborative Research in Tropical Medicine (KCCR)
- Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV)
- Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute (Swiss TPH)
- Université de Bordeaux
- University of Gondar, Ethiopia

Candidate drugs selection in partnership with Wellcome and the ACT-Accelerator Therapeutics partners

Results

The 26-partner consortium was set up very rapidly. The protocol was ready for submission by mid-June 2020 and funding was quickly granted, thanks to the clear medical need and experience of consortium members.

Nine of 13 countries have started recruitment. Despite support from AVAREF, approval processes per country took longer than anticipated, and importation of already-approved drugs remains a bottleneck in some countries. Changes in diagnostic referral impacted recruitment, so active screening was established at some sites.

An interim analysis was conducted after 300 patients were randomized with no treatment interruption resulting; the next is planned after 750 patients are randomized.

Conclusion

ANTICOV is driven by a unique research alliance to respond to region- and context-specific treatment needs, unlike much of the clinical research on COVID-19 to date.

In a context of emerging variants and inequitable vaccine access, the identification of therapeutics to prevent disease progression globally is a priority identified by the African region.

All clinical trial data generated by ANTICOV will be integrated and shared openly and transparently.

Every effort will be made to work with all relevant partners to ensure that treatments that prove safe and effective will be affordable, available, and accessible for all.

ANTICOV partners will work with the Unitaid ACT-A market dynamics group on availability, supply, and procurement.

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DNDi Drugs for Neglected Diseases *initiative*