

Corticosteroids in COVID-19: Defining best practice in Africa

Webinar Recap:



We recently held a webinar titled: *Corticosteroids in COVID-19; defining best practices in Africa*. The meeting was hosted by the African Academy of Sciences (AAS) on behalf of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (AUDA -NEPAD), African coalition for Epidemic Research, Response and Training (ALERRT), Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (AFRICA CDC) and the World Health Organization Regional Office for Africa (WHO Afro). These organizations have collaborated in the push to keep the African continent ahead of the rapidly developing COVID- 19 pandemic.

The objectives of the webinar were;

- To provide up-to date information on evidence of the effectiveness and safety of corticosteroids in COVID-19.
- To identify key questions for translating clinical trial evidence on the use of corticosteroids in COVID-19 into clinical practice in Africa.
- To gather input into translational research agenda to ensure guidance on corticosteroid use in COVID-19 is adapted to African standards.

During the meeting that was co-moderated by John Amuasi of Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and Francine Ntoumi of Congolese Foundation of Medical research;

- Results of the [Randomised Evaluation of COVID-19 Therapy \(RECOVERY\) trial](#) were presented. Dexamethasone reduced risk of dying in patients receiving respiratory support (invasive mechanical ventilation or on oxygen) and did not reduce mortality in patients not receiving respiratory support at randomization.
- A prospective [Meta-analysis of COVID-19 corticosteroid clinical trials](#) was discussed, which illustrated that use of systemic corticosteroids, compared with usual care or placebo, was associated with lower risk of death 28 days after randomization.
- The steps leading to development of the WHO guidelines for COVID-19 corticosteroids therapy and [published on the WHO website](#) on September 2 2020 as

well as corticosteroid recommendations, treatment regimens and global supply chain commitment from WHO were presented. WHO recommends use of systemic corticosteroids to treat severe and critically ill COVID-19 patients and not to use corticosteroids in treating patients with non-severe COVID-19.

- Corticosteroids and COVID 19 clinical dilemmas in Africa- level of diagnostics, monitoring and supportive care based on the Rwandan experience were discussed. This segment highlighted the improved outcomes obtained with corticosteroids for treatment of severe-critical ill COVID-19 patients but underlined that successful use also depends on timely and correct determination of COVID-19 diagnosis and symptoms as well as epidemiological history.
- Corticosteroids and COVID 19 clinical dilemmas in Africa -co-morbidities of COVID- 19 (HIV, TB, diabetes etc) were elaborated. Corticosteroids for COVID-19 should be used with consideration of both benefits and risks (adverse events, ability to reactivate latent infections more prevalent in African settings). Further studies are key in COVID-19 recovered patients to understand these risks and patients with new onset hyperglycemia should be followed up.
- The audience participated in a webinar survey to share their views and perceptions on use of corticosteroids for COVID-19 management in Africa.

119 Participants out of the 299 registered attended the Webinar, with 26 out of the 40 countries represented coming from Africa.

The webinar was simultaneously translated into French to incorporate our francophone audiences and had an active attendance of 16 participants from: Senegal, Cameroon, Gabon, Congo, Congo DRC, Tunisia, Algeria, Cote d`Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Benin, Tunisia and Togo.

Thanks for your participation!

Webinar Video [Link](#)

Webinar Slides [Link](#)

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Please share your thoughts, questions and comments with us through the email: Covid19team@aasciences.africa