

Anti-malarial drug hydroxychloroquine linked to higher death rate in VA coronavirus patient study

An anti-malarial drug President Trump has aggressively promoted to treat covid-19 had no benefit and was linked to higher rates of death for Veterans Affairs patients hospitalized with the novel [coronavirus](#), according to a study, raising further questions about the safety and efficacy of a treatment that has seen widespread use in the pandemic.

The [study](#) by VA and academic researchers analyzed outcomes of 368 male patients nationwide, with 97 receiving hydroxychloroquine, 113 receiving hydroxychloroquine in combination with the antibiotic azithromycin, and 158 not receiving any hydroxychloroquine.

Rates of death in the groups treated with the drugs were worse than those who did not receive the drugs, the study found. Rates of patients on ventilators were roughly equal, with no benefit demonstrated by the drugs.

More than 27 percent of patients treated with hydroxychloroquine died, and 22 percent of those treated with the combination therapy died, compared with an 11.4 percent death rate in those not treated with the drugs, the study said. The results were from an observational study of outcomes and were not part of a randomized, placebo-controlled clinical trial, which is the gold standard for testing drugs.

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Interest in the drugs peaked after Trump began repeatedly boosting their use in White House news conferences.

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