

# Is dexamethasone (Ozurdex) an effective treatment for COVID-19?



## In the news

On June 16, 2020, the University of Oxford put out a press release about the effectiveness of dexamethasone as a treatment for ventilated COVID-19 patients. These results are from the RECOVERY trial. **The full results have not yet been published.** For details, see box below. [[link](#)]

### STUDY SPOTLIGHT

Press release: **Dexamethasone reduces death in hospitalised patients with severe respiratory complications of COVID-19** [[link](#)]

#### Summary

- Results from the RECOVERY (Randomised Evaluation of COVID-19 thERapY) trial at Oxford University
- **Full results not yet published;** the following information is taken from the press release
- Randomized clinical trial
- Sites: unspecified NHS hospitals across the UK
- Treatment: dexamethasone 6 mg once per day (either by mouth or by intravenous injection)
- 2104 patients treated vs. 4321 control (randomized)

#### Conclusions

- **Dexamethasone reduced deaths by one third in ventilated patients and by one fifth in other patients receiving oxygen only**
- No benefit among those patients who did not require respiratory support

## Twitter Buzz

Response on Twitter is mostly positive, but there are a number of academics and health care professionals expressing concern that this press release has led to immediate change in practice, even though the full results of the trial have yet to be published.

[Link to top results for "dexamethasone" on Twitter](#)

## Evidence Syntheses

As of June 17, 2020, there are **no evidence syntheses on dexamethasone as a treatment for COVID-19.**

There have been several evidence syntheses published about corticosteroids in general for COVID-19. One published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal (May 14, 2020), found that "[c]orticosteroids may reduce mortality for patients with COVID-19 and ARDS [acute respiratory distress syndrome]. For patients with severe COVID-19 but without ARDS, evidence regarding benefit from different bodies of evidence is inconsistent and of very low quality." [1]

Epistemonikos has produced a Living Overview of the Evidence (L-OVE) for COVID-19, including dexamethasone. This L-OVE uses systematic search methods is routinely updated, and includes information from clinical trials registers and preprint servers. [[link](#)]

## Single Studies

As of June 17, 2020, **no clinical trials** have yet reported on the effectiveness of dexamethasone for COVID-19.

## Ongoing Trials

A number of ongoing clinical trials list dexamethasone as a treatment of interest, including the RECOVERY trial.

# ongoing trials as of June 17, 2020	12
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[Link to ongoing dexamethasone trial abstracts in Epistemonikos](#)

## Search Methods

### MEDLINE

Date searched: 2020-06-17

Search string: (dexamethasone or ozurdex).ti,ab,kw,kf.

COVID-19 filter: MEDLINE built-in

Major journals filter: (cmaj or jama or n engl j med or lancet or science or nature or bmj or ann intern med or plos one).ja.

### Epistemonikos

Manual search for dexamethasone (2020-06-17)

## References

1. Ye Z, Wang Y, Colunga-Lozano LE, et al. Efficacy and safety of corticosteroids in COVID-19 based on evidence for COVID-19, other coronavirus infections, influenza, community-acquired pneumonia and acute respiratory distress syndrome: a systematic review and meta-analysis. CMAJ. 2020. doi:10.1503/cmaj.200645 [[link](#)]

***Please note: This summary is not being kept up to date, and reflects evidence up to and including June 17, 2020 only.***