European Commission

Supporting and coordinating research to assess new therapies (September 2020)

Using convalescent plasma to treat COVID-19

The European Commission is providing a €4 million grant, through its Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme, to the **SUPPORT-E** project, to co-ordinate and support clinical studies to provide the necessary evidence on the safety and effectiveness of COVID-19 convalescent plasma (CCP) transfusion across the EU.

The SUPPORT-E consortium, led by the **European Blood Alliance** (EBA) brings together 12 partner major European blood establishments and clinical centres with world-class research capabilities from six Member States (Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands) together with Switzerland and the UK.

The Commission supports research on the **therapeutic use of plasma** from recovered Covid-19 patients, encouraged by early indications of efficacy and an apparent very low incidence of adverse reactions. However, it is generally recognised in the scientific community that **more evidence on efficacy is needed**[1], in particular on the optimal treatment protocol. Thus, randomised controlled clinical trials are required to provide the highest quality of evidence of efficacy and safety.

SUPPORT-E represents a key EU coordinated research effort on passive immunotherapy, sharing data and protocols in real-time. **The consortium will deliver harmonised recommendations on CCP collection, testing and therapeutic use** and will **help Europe prepare for future epidemics by novel pathogens**.

The aims SUPPORT-E are:

- to strengthen Europe's capacity to offer therapeutic relief to patients with COVID-19 with a shared approach based on research findings from high quality clinical evaluation of convalescent plasma;
- to contribute to spreading knowledge on CCP in Europe as a potential therapeutic option for COVID-19;
- to provide a blueprint for convalescent plasma therapy for future outbreaks with COVID-19 or other diseases.

[1] "Evidence lags behind excitement over blood plasma as a coronavirus treatment", **Nature**, 19 August 2020. https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-02324-2#

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11 September 2020

SUPPORT-E contributes to the open-access EU database on COVID convalescent plasma (EU CCP DB) developed by the Commission in collaboration with EBA, by gathering, monitoring and analysing data on convalescent plasma donations and patient outcomes following transfusions. Ultimately, it will consolidate evidence on the safety and effectiveness of this therapy.

SUPPORT-E adds to the portfolio of EU-funded research actions and complements the public health policy and activities that the Commission is coordinating with the Member States.

Partners in SUPPORT-E - Supporting high quality evaluation of COVID-19 convalescent Plasma throughout Europe

European Blood Alliance (EBA)

Etablissement Français du Sang (FR)

DRK-Blutspendedienst Baden-Württemberg – Hessen (DE)

Stichting Sanquin Bloedvoorziening (NL)

Belgische Rode Kruis (BE)

Aarhus Universitetshospital (DK)

Istituto Superiore di Sanità (IT)

Fondazione IRCCS Policlinico San Matteo (IT)

Azienda Socio Sanitaria Territoriale di Mantova (IT)

NHS Blood and Transplant (UK)

Statens Serum Institut (DK)

Blutspende SRK Schweiz AG (CH)

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