

SHOULD CORTICOSTEROIDS BE USED TO TREAT COVID-19 IN HOSPITALISED PATIENTS?

Rapid Review for COVID-19

THE KEY REVIEW QUESTION

This review aimed to determine whether corticosteroids should be used for managing patients hospitalised with severe COVID-19 and receiving respiratory support.

This review incorporates additional evidence. View [full rapid review of corticosteroids](#).

WHAT WAS INCLUDED IN REVIEW?

- This review summarised data from **eight randomised placebo-controlled trials (RCTs)** evidenced in two electronic databases [Epistemonikos](#) and the [Cochrane COVID-19 Study Register](#).
- Data were gathered from **1 844 hospitalised adult patients**, comparing corticosteroids to the standard of care/placebo.

BACKGROUND

While corticosteroids inhibit pro-inflammatory genes, they are also associated with harms in patients with SARS and MERS-CoV with no survival benefit. The benefits and harms of using steroids for COVID-19 are not well known.

WHO rapid guidance (Sept 2020) recommends the use of **systemic corticosteroids** in patients with **severe and critical COVID-19**. **Corticosteroids are not recommended for use in patients with non-severe COVID-19.**



ADDITIONAL RAPID COVID-19 REVIEWS CAN BE FOUND [HERE](#).



health

Department: Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



WHAT DID THE REVIEW FIND?



Systemic corticosteroids reduced mortality at Day 28 in critically ill patients.

CONFIDENCE
HIGH



In hospitalised patients not requiring respiratory support, there was no evidence of benefit, and a possibility of harms.



Systemic corticosteroids may also be considered in patients with COVID-19 diagnosed with septic shock.

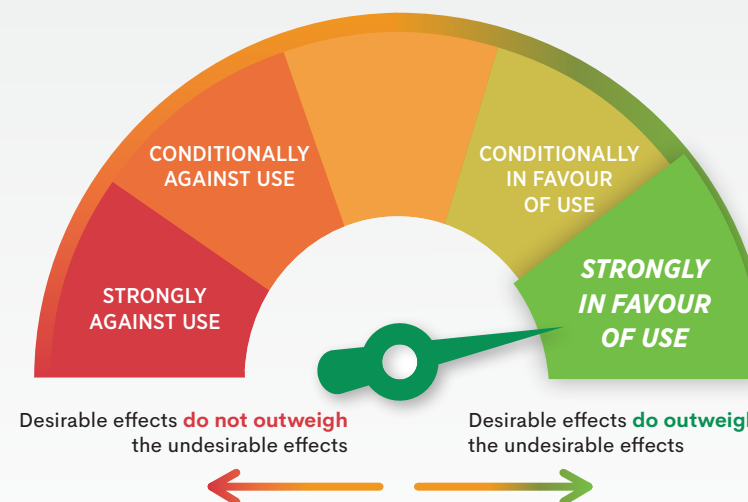
CONFIDENCE
MEDIUM



No studies have, as yet, reported on the use of corticosteroids in children with severe COVID-19.

CONFIDENCE
LOW

RECOMMENDATION OF THE NATIONAL ESSENTIAL MEDICINES LIST COMMITTEE ON COVID-19 THERAPEUTICS ON USE OF CORTICOSTEROIDS FOR SEVERE COVID-19



SA GRADE IS SUPPORTED THROUGH FUNDING FROM CEBHA+ AND READ-IT: [DETAILS HERE](#).

CONSIDERATIONS

- Corticosteroids **reduced mortality**
- Serious adverse event definitions varied between the trials so formal meta-analysis of these data was not performed.
- It is not yet clear when to initiate corticosteroids treatment
- Evidence of the value of corticosteroids in the treatment of children and HIV-infected patients remains limited**

RECOMMENDATION

The trials were **moderate quality** and **the benefits of corticosteroids outweigh the risks.**

NEML MAC recommends the use of corticosteroids in hospitalised patients with severe COVID-19 who require supplemental oxygen.

REVIEW PUBLICATION DATE
20 October 2020 (2nd update)