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RVH joins global COVID-19 study

Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre (RVH) is one of nearly 40 health centres across Canada selected to participate in a clinical trial to examine potential therapies for COVID-19.

The clinical trial is part of the World Health Organization's (WHO) Solidarity Trial. Dr. Giulio DiDiodato, critical care physician and Chief Research Scientist; Dr. Ana Igric, critical care physician and general surgeon; Dr. Murali Krishnan, nephrologist, will lead RVH's contributions to this global study.

The Canadian contribution, dubbed Canadian Treatments for COVID-19 (CATCO), is coordinated by Toronto's Sunnybrook Research Institute, and led by principal investigators Dr. Srinivas Murthy, critical care physician at BC Children's Hospital in Vancouver, and Dr. Rob Fowler, critical care physician at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre.

"The study has already enrolled thousands of patients around the world, and it is expected to need thousands more before a definitive answer about the benefits of treatment can be determined. Studies like CATCO are essential to ensure the treatments patients receive for any illness are safe and have more benefit than harm," says Dr. DiDiodato.

Patients requiring hospitalization for COVID-19 at RVH may be eligible to participate in the trial and will receive either supportive care or the study medication plus supportive care.

The CATCO trial is expected to run for approximately two years and will use an adaptive clinical trial design to ensure leading treatment opportunities are available to patients. For example, previous study medications hydroxychloroquine and lopinavir-ritonavir, recently discontinued by the WHO due to lack of effect, will be replaced by other leading drug candidates.

This multinational trial is unprecedented in its level of global collaboration and will hopefully provide much-needed evidence as to which drugs can safely and effectively be used to treat COVID-19.

"RVH's participation in the CATCO trial offers Simcoe Muskoka residents an opportunity to access potentially helpful treatments for COVID-19," says Christine Di Marco, RVH Clinical Trials coordinator, adding, "RVH's recent focus on teaching and research has prepared us to respond to challenging health trends and needs by rallying together to find new solutions."

The CATCO trial is being conducted with support from the Canadian Institute of Health Research, the Canadian Critical Care Trials Group, and the Association of Medical Microbiology and Infectious Disease Canada. RVH's participation in this study was also made possible through local donations to the RVH Foundation's COVID-19 fund.

More information on the CATCO trial can be found at <https://www.clinicaltrials.gov/>

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