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## FIP STATEMENT OF POLICY

### FIP Holding Statement on COVID-19 treatment with hydroxychloroquine/ chloroquine (June 2020)

*An FIP Holding Statement is an initial statement about an issue or issues pending further evidence and about which FIP intends to make a further statement, in these cases, with further evidence. It is not a FIP Position Statement.*

*This Holding Statement updates the Holding Statement dated 24 April 2020.*

**8 June 2020**

FIP recognises the efficacy of hydroxychloroquine in the prevention and treatment of malaria in areas where malaria remains sensitive to chloroquine. We also note the other uses of hydroxychloroquine in the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, and porphyria cutanea tarda, so its use is relatively widespread. Indeed, in some countries, the increased prescribing of hydroxychloroquine for COVID-19 has led to shortages in supply to patients with these chronic diseases.

FIP's vision is a world where everyone benefits from access to safe, effective, quality and affordable medicines and health technologies, as well as from pharmaceutical care services provided by pharmacists, in collaboration with other healthcare professionals. The documented benefit of hydroxychloroquine in treating coronavirus is very limited, especially in severe disease.<sup>1</sup> FIP is aware that in vitro studies have shown that chloroquine is effective against several viruses, including severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV). To date, available clinical trials have not demonstrated that either of these drugs are clearly effective.<sup>1</sup> Given the substantial morbidity and mortality associated with COVID-19, FIP welcomes any re-purposing of existing therapies with sufficient evidence of efficacy and safety across all



populations and groups. However, until future studies better elucidate the most effective schedule of administration and potential adverse effects, we cannot assume hydroxychloroquine or chloroquine are safe and efficacious treatments for the disease.

The World Health Organization recently halted testing of hydroxychloroquine as a possible treatment for coronavirus because of safety fears: a study<sup>2</sup> suggested that hydroxychloroquine could increase the risk of patients dying from COVID-19. This study has now been retracted and the WHO trials have recommenced.

It was subsequently announced that the UK's RECOVERY Trial, which is investigating potential COVID-19 treatments, will no longer include hydroxychloroquine due to no evidence of benefit. The trial randomly selected 1,542 patients to receive hydroxychloroquine as a treatment compared with 3,132 patients who received the usual standard care. Further information at <https://bit.ly/37g2Gle>.

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## References

1. Sanders J, Monogue M, Jodlowski T, et al. Pharmacologic treatments for coronavirus disease 2019: A review. JAMA. Published online April 13, 2020. doi:10.1001/jama.2020.6019 Available at <https://bit.ly/2zdAToD>
2. Mehra M.R., Desai S.S., Ruschitzka F, et al. Hydroxychloroquine or chloroquine with or without a macrolide for treatment of COVID-19: a multinational registry analysis. Published online 22 May, 2020. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(20)31174-0 Available at <https://bit.ly/3dSf11B>