

Australia to use intravenous zinc in COVID-19 fight

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A world-first trial will see researchers from Australia's Austin Health and the University of Melbourne, use intravenous zinc to fight the symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19).

The trial will be led by Austin Health's Dr Joseph Ischia and Dr Oneel Patel from the Department of Surgery at the University of Melbourne, who has a long history of investigating the protective effects of intravenous zinc against organ damage induced by lack of oxygen.

Dr Ischia, said COVID-19 is especially dangerous because it replicates inside a patient's body which can lead to respiratory conditions like bronchitis and pneumonia.

"If COVID-19 enters a patient's lungs then they often need to be placed on a ventilator to help their breathing and, in severe cases, COVID-19 can cause multiple organ failure and brain injury due to a lack of oxygen," he said.

Dr Patel said studies have shown that zinc is very effective at slowing the rate that similar viruses such as SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) and common cold (a type of coronavirus) replicate in the body.

"Our published studies have also shown that high doses of zinc can protect vital organs such as the heart, kidneys and liver against the damage caused by a lack of oxygen," he said.

"This clinical trial has been fast-tracked to test whether receiving a daily injection of zinc chloride will benefit patients with coronavirus," Dr Ischia said.