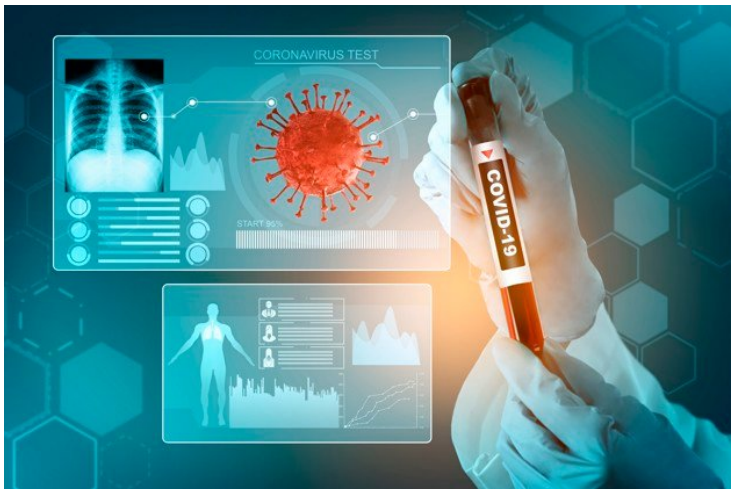
BioSpectrum
the business of Bio & Health Sciences
ASIA EDITION

UK conducts innovative COVID-19 trials with deliberate volunteered infection

March 2, 2021 | News

Through the world's first Human Challenge studies researchers aim to assist in accelerating scientific studies related to coronavirus impact and vaccine development.



United Kingdom government announced an investment of 33.6 million pounds ($43.5 million) in a study called “human challenge” clinical trials involving a partnership including Imperial College London, hVIVO (a laboratory and clinical trials services venture), and the Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust. As part of these clinical trials, young and healthy volunteers step up to be intentionally infected by COVID-19 in a bid to accelerate the development of safe and ever more effective vaccines. The proposed research must now pass the muster of both regulators and an ethics committee. Now reports from the U.S. and UK report these studies are set to commence starting with a trial to include 90 volunteers aged 18 to 30—these young people will be exposed to COVID-19 in a “safe and controlled environment.”

With an aim to investigate what is the smallest amount of the novel coronavirus necessary to trigger infection, the researchers seek to not only accelerate vaccine development but also to better understand how the virus impacts its human hosts.

The study is expected to lead to more information and knowledge about how COVID-19 impacts followed by vaccinating individuals to identify the most effective vaccines and thus accelerate their development. study’s website.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) Guidance, this class of research can in fact be deemed ethics assuming they meet select criteria. With protections in place and young and healthy participants coupled with the highest quality medical services and continuous monitoring, these trials are actually acceptable, reports Imperial College of London.

Dr. Chris Chiu, Department of Infectious Diseases, Imperial College London. According to a news release from Imperial College London, the initial study goal is to help to participate scientists better understand how the immune system reacts to COVID-19 while also contributing to the collective knowledge as to how to identify factors that influence how the virus is actually transmitted. For example, how a person who is infected ‘sheds’ infectious virus particles into the environment. Up to 90 carefully selected, healthy adult volunteers (aged 18 to 30) will be exposed to the virus in a safe and controlled environment.

The Royal Free Hospital—they house secure, specialized research facilities in London designed to specifically contain the virus. The researchers from Royal Free Hospital are also working with the North Central London (NCL) Adult Critical Care Network to ensure the study will not impact on the NHS' ability to care for patients during the pandemic. The virus characterization study requires their sign off.