



Topic Brief: Virus Research

Date: 5/19/2020

Nomination Number: 909

Purpose: This document summarizes the information addressing a nomination submitted on 5/19/2020 through the Effective Health Care Website. This information was used to inform the Evidence-based Practice Center (EPC) Program decisions about whether to produce an evidence report on the topic, and if so, what type of evidence report would be most suitable.

Issue: The nominator is asking about research sites that are studying viral treatments.

Program Decision: The EPC Program develops evidence reviews to inform healthcare decision-making for a variety of stakeholders. The nominator's request falls outside the purview of AHRQ and the EPC Program.

Background

- A virus is a small parasite that cannot reproduce by itself. Once it infects a susceptible cell, however, a virus can direct the cell machinery to produce more viruses. Most viruses have either RNA or DNA as their genetic material.¹
- Different viruses attack certain cells in your body such as your liver, respiratory system, or blood.² For example influenza is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness. Serious outcomes can include hospitalization or death.³
- There are antiviral medicines to treat selected viral infections. For most viral infections though, treatments help with symptoms while the immune system fights the virus. Antibiotics do not work for viral infections. Vaccines can help prevent people from getting viral diseases.²

Assessment Methods

We assessed nomination for priority for a systematic review or other AHRQ EHC report with a hierarchical process using established selection criteria. Assessment of each criteria determined the need to evaluate the next one.

1. Determine the *appropriateness* of the nominated topic for inclusion in the EHC program.
2. Establish the overall *importance* of a potential topic as representing a health or healthcare issue in the United States.
3. Determine the *desirability of new evidence review* by examining whether a new systematic review or other AHRQ product would be duplicative.
4. Assess the *potential impact* a new systematic review or other AHRQ product.
5. Assess whether the *current state of the evidence* allows for a systematic review or other AHRQ product (feasibility).
6. Determine the *potential value* of a new systematic review or other AHRQ product.

Summary of Selection Criteria Assessment

The nominator is requesting information about research sites across the world that are studying treatments for viral infections. The EPC Program develops evidence reviews to inform healthcare decision-making for a variety of stakeholders. The nominator's request falls outside the purview of AHRQ and the EPC Program.

The nominator may consult the ClinicalTrials.gov Website for information about ongoing trials. According to this Website on 5/19/2020 there were 339,723 research studies about COVID-19 in all 50 states and in 213 countries.

References

1. Lodish H BA, Zipursky SL, et al. . Molecular Cell Biology. 4th Edition ed. New York: W. H. Freeman; 2000.
2. Viral Infections. Bethesda, MD: U.S. National Library of Medicine. <https://medlineplus.gov/viralinfections.html>. Accessed on 21 May 2020.
3. Influenza. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm>. Accessed on 20 May 2020.

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Conflict of Interest: None of the investigators have any affiliations or financial involvement that conflicts with the material presented in this report.

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