Hydroxychloroquine can shorten time to recovery in COVID-19: study

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(HealthDay)—Hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) can shorten time to clinical recovery and promote pneumonia absorption among patients with coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), according to a study that has not yet been peer reviewed and was posted online March 31 at medRxiv.org.

Zhaowei Chen, from the Renmin Hospital of Wuhan University in China, and colleagues examined the efficacy of HCQ in treatment of COVID-19. Sixty-two patients with COVID-19 diagnosed and admitted from Feb. 4 to Feb. 28, 2020, were randomly assigned to receive an additional five-day HCQ treatment or standard treatment (control).

The researchers found that the control and HCQ groups did not differ in terms of age and sex distribution. For time to clinical recovery, the HCQ group had significantly shortened body temperature recovery time and cough remission time. Compared with the control group, the HCQ group had a larger proportion of patients with improved pneumonia (80.6 versus 54.8 percent). Four patients—all in the control group—progressed to severe illness. There were two patients with mild adverse reactions in the HCQ treatment group.

"Despite our small number of cases, the potential of HCQ in the treatment of COVID-19 has been partially confirmed. Considering that there is no better option at present, it is a promising practice to apply HCQ to COVID-19 under reasonable management," the authors write. "However, large-scale clinical and basic research is still needed to clarify its specific mechanism and to continuously optimize the treatment plan."

More information: Abstract/Full Text (subscription or payment may be required)