Addition of zinc may benefit some being treated for COVID-19

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(HealthDay)—For hospitalized patients with COVID-19, the addition of zinc sulfate to hydroxychloroquine and azithromycin may improve some outcomes, according to a study not yet peer reviewed and posted on medRxiv.org.

Philip M. Carlucci, from New York University Grossman School of Medicine in New York City, and colleagues collected data from electronic medical records for COVID-19 patients with admission dates from March 2 to April 5, 2020. Hospital outcomes were compared for patients who received hydroxychloroquine and azithromycin plus zinc (411 patients) versus those who received hydroxychloroquine and azithromycin alone (521 patients).

The researchers found that the addition of zinc sulfate had no impact on the length of hospitalization, duration of ventilation, or duration of intensive care unit (ICU) stay. Zinc sulfate increased the frequency of patients being discharged home and reduced the need for ventilation, admission to the ICU, and mortality or transfer to hospice for patients not admitted to the ICU in univariate analyses. Findings remained significant for increased frequency of being discharged home and reduction in mortality or transfer to hospice after adjustment for the time at which zinc sulfate was added to the protocol (odds ratios, 1.53 and 0.449, respectively).

"This study should not be used to guide clinical practice," the authors write. "Rather, our observations support the initiation of future randomized clinical trials investigating zinc sulfate against COVID-19."

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