

# IIMHL & IIDL Leadership Briefing VII

## COVID-19 and research innovations

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7 May 2020

This briefing describes research information from national and international agencies to assist IIMHL countries to better understand COVID-19 research.

### **CANADA: Prime Minister announces new support for COVID-19 medical research and vaccine development**

April 23, 2020

Ottawa, Ontario

The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, today announced more than \$1 billion in support of a national medical research strategy to fight COVID-19 that includes vaccine development, the production of treatments, and tracking of the virus. This new funding builds on the \$275 million investment for coronavirus research and medical countermeasures announced in March.

The Government of Canada will invest in new medical countermeasures to better understand COVID-19, and develop the infrastructure needed to fight the virus here in Canada. This includes:

- The establishment of the COVID-19 Immunity Task Force that will operate under the direction of a leadership group, which will include Dr. David Naylor, Dr. Catherine Hankins, Dr. Tim Evans, Dr. Theresa Tam, and Dr. Mona Nemer. The task force will establish priorities and oversee the coordination of a series of country-wide blood test surveys that will tell us how widely the virus has spread in Canada and provide reliable estimates of potential immunity and vulnerabilities in Canadian populations.
- \$40 million for the Canadian COVID-19 Genomics Network (CanCOGeN), led by Genome Canada, to coordinate a COVID-19 viral and host genome sequencing effort across Canada. This research will help track the virus, its different strains, and how it makes people sick in different ways, providing valuable information to public health authorities and decision-makers as they put in place measures to control the pandemic. The results of this work will be available to researchers globally to support additional research, including Canadian vaccine development efforts.
- \$23 million for the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization-International Vaccine Centre (VIDO-InterVac) to accelerate development of a vaccine against COVID-19. This funding will support pre-clinical testing and clinical trials of a potential COVID-19 vaccine, essential steps to ensuring that vaccines are effective and safe for human use.

- \$29 million for the National Research Council of Canada to begin the second phase of critical upgrades to its Human Health Therapeutics facility in Montréal. Building on ongoing work to ready the facility for the production of vaccines for clinical trials, this funding will support operations to maintain the facility, as well as provide infrastructure to prepare vials for individual doses as soon as a vaccine becomes available.
- \$600 million, through the Strategic Innovation Fund, over two years to support COVID-19 vaccine and therapy clinical trials led by the private sector, and Canadian biomanufacturing opportunities.
- \$10 million for a Canadian data monitoring initiative so we can coordinate and share pandemic-related data across the country to enhance Canada's response to COVID-19.
- \$10.3 million over two years, and \$5 million ongoing, to support the Canadian Immunization Research Network in conducting vaccine-related research and clinical trials, and to enhance Canada's capacity to monitor vaccine safety and effectiveness.
- \$114.9 million through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research for research projects that will accelerate the development, testing, and implementation of medical and social countermeasures to mitigate the rapid spread of COVID-19, as well as its social and health impacts.

<https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2020/04/23/prime-minister-announces-new-support-covid-19-medical-research-and>

#### Associated Links

- [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan](#)
- [Canada's plan to mobilize science to fight COVID-19](#)
- [Prime Minister announces new partnerships with Canadian industries to fight COVID-19](#)
- [Prime Minister announces Canada's Plan to Mobilize Industry to fight COVID-19](#)

## **Multidisciplinary research priorities for the COVID-19 pandemic: a call for action for mental health science**

*Holmes et al Published: April 15, 2020 The Lancet*

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic is having a profound effect on all aspects of society, including mental health and physical health. We explore the psychological, social, and neuroscientific effects of COVID-19 and set out the immediate priorities and longer-term strategies for mental health science research.

The need to maintain high-quality research standards is imperative. International collaboration and a global perspective will be beneficial. An immediate priority is collecting high-quality data on the mental health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic across the whole population and vulnerable groups, and on brain function, cognition, and mental health of patients with COVID-19.

There is an urgent need for research to address how mental health consequences for vulnerable groups can be mitigated under pandemic conditions, and on the impact of repeated media consumption and health messaging around COVID-19. Discovery, evaluation, and refinement of mechanistically driven interventions to address the psychological, social, and neuroscientific aspects of the pandemic are required. Rising to this challenge will require integration across disciplines and sectors, and should be done together with people with lived experience. New funding will be required to meet these priorities, and it can be efficiently leveraged by the UK's world-leading infrastructure.

This Position Paper provides a strategy that may be both adapted for, and integrated with, research efforts in other countries.

<https://reader.elsevier.com/reader/sd/pii/S2215036620301681?token=0ACFF00F1A5003387B878E2BB278942602140AF8324BB36E4C442BE68C1641E2EA9449774CF780B7B368D51C6B27D9C5>

## **A Coordinated Global Research Roadmap: 2019 Novel Coronavirus**

*World Health Organisation March 2020*

On 11-12 February 2020, WHO, in collaboration with the Global Research Collaboration for Infectious Disease Preparedness and Response (GLOPID-R) – an international network of funders to facilitate coordination and information sharing, organized a Global Forum on research and innovation for COVID-19 ('Global Research Forum').

Research topics discussed included: 1) virus: natural history, transmission and diagnostics; 2) animal and environmental research on the virus origin, and management measures at the human-animal interface; 3) epidemiological studies; 4) clinical characterization and management; 5) infection prevention and control, including health care workers' protection; 6) candidate therapeutics R&D; 7) candidate vaccines R&D; 8) ethical considerations for research and; 9) integrating social sciences in the outbreak response.

This document presents a Global Research Roadmap with immediate, mid-term and longer-term priorities to build a robust global research response on the basis of the deliberations during the Global Research Forum.

<https://www.who.int/who-documents-detail/a-coordinated-global-research-roadmap>

## **Our guide to COVID-19 evidence resources “COVID-END”**

McMaster University Health Forum, April 2020

To help health- and social-system leaders as they respond to unprecedented challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic, teams from the McMaster Health Forum and Ottawa Hospital Research Institute and the Africa Centre for Evidence have compiled a list of evidence sources.

To suggest additional open access evidence sources related to the COVID-19 pandemic, please email us at [forum@mcmaster.ca](mailto:forum@mcmaster.ca).

<https://www.mcmasterforum.org/networks/covid-end/resources-to-support-decision-makers/guide-to-key-covid-19-evidence-sources>