The BMJ

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2021;374:n2319<http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n2319>

Published: 21 September 2021

Covid-19: Monoclonal antibody treatment to be rolled out to hospital patients with no antibody response

Elisabeth Mahase

Eligible patients with covid-19 in UK hospitals who have not mounted an antibody response against SARS-CoV-2 will be offered the monoclonal antibody treatment ronapreve from this week, the government has announced.

The drug is a combination of two monoclonal antibodies (casirivimab and imdevimab), which work by binding to two different sites on the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein and neutralising the virus's ability to infect cells. It was the first neutralising antibody drug specifically designed to treat covid-19 approved by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (in August 2021).¹

Ronapreve will be administered to patients without antibodies—who must be either aged 50 or over, or aged 12 to 49 and considered to be immunocompromised—through a drip. The government said it had secured enough supply for NHS patients across the four nations and that antibody testing will be used to determine which patients are eligible.

England's health secretary, Sajid Javid, said, "We have secured a brand new treatment for our most vulnerable patients in hospitals across the UK . . . The UK is leading the world in identifying and rolling out lifesaving medicines, particularly for covid-19, and we will continue our vital work to find the best treatments available to save lives and protect the NHS."

Japan was the first country to license the drug in July after a phase III trial reported that it reduced hospital admissions or deaths by 70% in high risk non-admitted patients. The treatment is administered either by injection or infusion and was found to reduce symptom duration by four days.

The combination of casirivimab and imdevimab was also tested as part of the UK's Recovery trial, which concluded that it reduced the risk of death when given to patients admitted to hospital with severe covid-19 who had not mounted a natural antibody response to the virus.

¹ Mahase E. Covid-19: UK approves first monoclonal antibody treatment. *BMJ* 2021;374:n2083. doi: 10.1136/bmj.n2083 pmid: 34417168

This article is made freely available for use in accordance with BMJ's website terms and conditions for the duration of the covid-19 pandemic or until otherwise determined by BMJ. You may use, download and print the article for any lawful, non-commercial purpose (including text and data mining) provided that all copyright notices and trade marks are retained.