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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Does Adding of Hydroxychloroquine to the Standard Care Provide any Benefit in Reducing the Mortality among COVID-19 Patients?: a Systematic Review

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Dear Prof. Gendelman

The recent retractions of two articles from the *Lancet* (Mehra et al. 2020a) and the *New England Journal of Medicine* (Mehra et al. 2020b) on the use of hydroxychloroquine has highlighted the needs for increased scrutiny of primary data sources. These retractions have created doubts in the minds of physicians and physician-scientists on therapeutic usages for Corona Virus Disease - 2019 (COVID-19) and the tremendous pressure placed on health care providers to find definitive preventive and treatment strategies. Recently we also published a Systematic Review titled *"Does Adding of Hydroxychloroquine to the Standard Care Provide any Benefit in Reducing the Mortality among COVID-19 Patients?: a Systematic Review for the Journal of Neuroimmune Pharmacology"* (Patel et al. 2020). Our primary aim was to search out whether hydroxychloroquine would reduce the mortality of the Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) infection. We performed the secondary analysis of mortality data from both non randomized controlled trial and retrospective observational studies available in the public domain.

For clarity, independent study results were used in our research**.** None of the included studies in our systemic review were linked to recent retractions. Indeed, the findings of meta-analysis depend on the credibility of the included studies and data extraction process. We wish to affirm the data extraction and analyses made to the Journal's readership. To meet the ethical standards of publications, we herein share data extraction sheet (Supplementary File 1) and ReVMan software file (Supplementary File 2) of the analyses performed. We also want to state that the findings of our systematic review are preliminary and await further confirmatory data sets. It should only be interpreted in the lights of such limitations.

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