AVIFAVIR IN TREATING PATIENTS WITH MODERATE COVID 19

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DEAR EDITOR

THIS IS IN REFERENCE TO THE STUDY TITLED “AVIFAVIR FOR THE TREATMENT OF PATIENTS WITH MODERATE COVID 19: INTERIM RESULTS OF A PHASE II/III MULTICENTER RANDOISED CONTROLLED TRIAL” PUBLISHED IN YOUR JOURNAL ON 09 AUGUST 2020. WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE RESULTS PRESENTED IN THIS STUDY AND WOULD LIKE TO BRING YOUR ATTENTION TO THE FOLLOWING:

1. THE SAMPLE SIZE OF 60 (40 PEOPLE IN FAVIPIRAVIR ARM AND 20 PEOPLE IN STANDARD OF CARE ARM) IS NOT SUFFICIENT TO MAKE VALID CONCLUSIONS.

2. FEVER ABOVE 38 DEGREE WAS PRESENT IN ONLY 25% OF THE STUDIED POPULATION,SO CONCLUSIONS ABOUT FASTER RESOLUTION OF FEVER WAS BASED ON DATA FROM 15 PATIENTS ONLY.

3. 75% OF the POPULATION STUDIED HAD MILD DISEASE NOT REQUIRING OXYGEN, WHICH WOULD BE EXPECTED TO RESOLVE SPONTANEOUSLY WITHOUT AN ANTIVIRAL DRUG.

4. RNA CLEARANCE AT DAY 10 WAS SIMILAR IN ALL THE THREE GROUPS.

5. THE RESULTS SHOWED THAT DESPITE THE FACT THAT 80-90% PATIENTS BECAME COVID PCR NEGATIVE BY DAY 10 AND FEVER RESOLVED WITHIN 2-4 DAYS FOR ALL, ONLY 30% WERE DISCHARED BY DAY 10. IT IS UNCLEAR WHY THE PATIENTS WERE STILL HOSPITALISED DESPITE BEING AFEBRILE AND PCR NEGATIVE.

6. BY DAY 15, AROUND 80% OF BOTH GROUPS WERE DISCHARGED, INDICATING THAT THERE IS NO REDUCTION IN HOSPITAL STAY WITH THE STUDY DRUG.

7. TWO (5%) PATIENTS IN THE AVIFAVIR GROUP REQUIRED VENTILATION AND DIED, WITH NO DEATH IN THE STANDARD OF CARE ARM, INDICATING THAT THE DRUG DID NOT PREVENT PRORESSION TO SEVERE DISEASE.

IT IS APPARENT THAT THIS STUDY DOES NOT SUPPORT THE USE OF THIS DRUG IN ANY PATIENT WITH COVID 19 AT THIS POINT. WE AWAIT PUBLICATION OF RANDOMIZED, PLACEBO CONTROLLED TRIALS.

None of the authors has any potential conflicts to disclose.

REFERENCE:

Ivashchenko, A. A. (2020). AVIFAVIR for Treatment of Patients with Moderate COVID-19: Interim Results of a Phase II/III Multicenter Randomized Clinical Trial. Clinical Infectious Diseases. doi:10.1093/cid/ciaa1176.