

Physicians report expanding use of off-label COVID-19 treatments

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Hydroxychloroquine usage is expanding globally to treat novel

coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19), although plasma from recovered patients is perceived as more effective than hydroxychloroquine, according to a report released by Sermo.

Sermo, a global health care polling company and [social platform](#) for physicians, released results of its Real Time Barometer study (March 30 to April 2) to understand COVID-19 treatments and their efficacy. A minimum of 250 respondents per country for 30 countries participated (United States, Canada, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, France, Spain, Belgium, Netherlands, Sweden, Turkey, Poland, Russia, Finland, Ireland, Switzerland, Austria, Denmark, Norway, Greece, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, Australia, China, India, and Hong Kong).

According to the results of the survey, the top three treatments that doctors most reported prescribing for COVID-19 were azithromycin or similar antibiotics (50 percent), hydroxychloroquine or chloroquine (44 percent), and bronchodilators (36 percent). Reported usage of hydroxychloroquine nearly doubled (23 to 40 percent) week over week in New York. Among COVID-19-treating physicians, the top three treatments that have been used and perceived as very or extremely effective included plasma from recovered patients (52 percent), hydroxychloroquine (38 percent), and nonapproved drugs (e.g., remdesivir; 37 percent).

"While reason for optimism, as a clinical researcher, I strongly recommend to pause at further interpretation until we can measure the clinical effectiveness," Brian Ferris, M.D., president of the Pacific NW Vascular Society in Washington state, said in a statement.

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