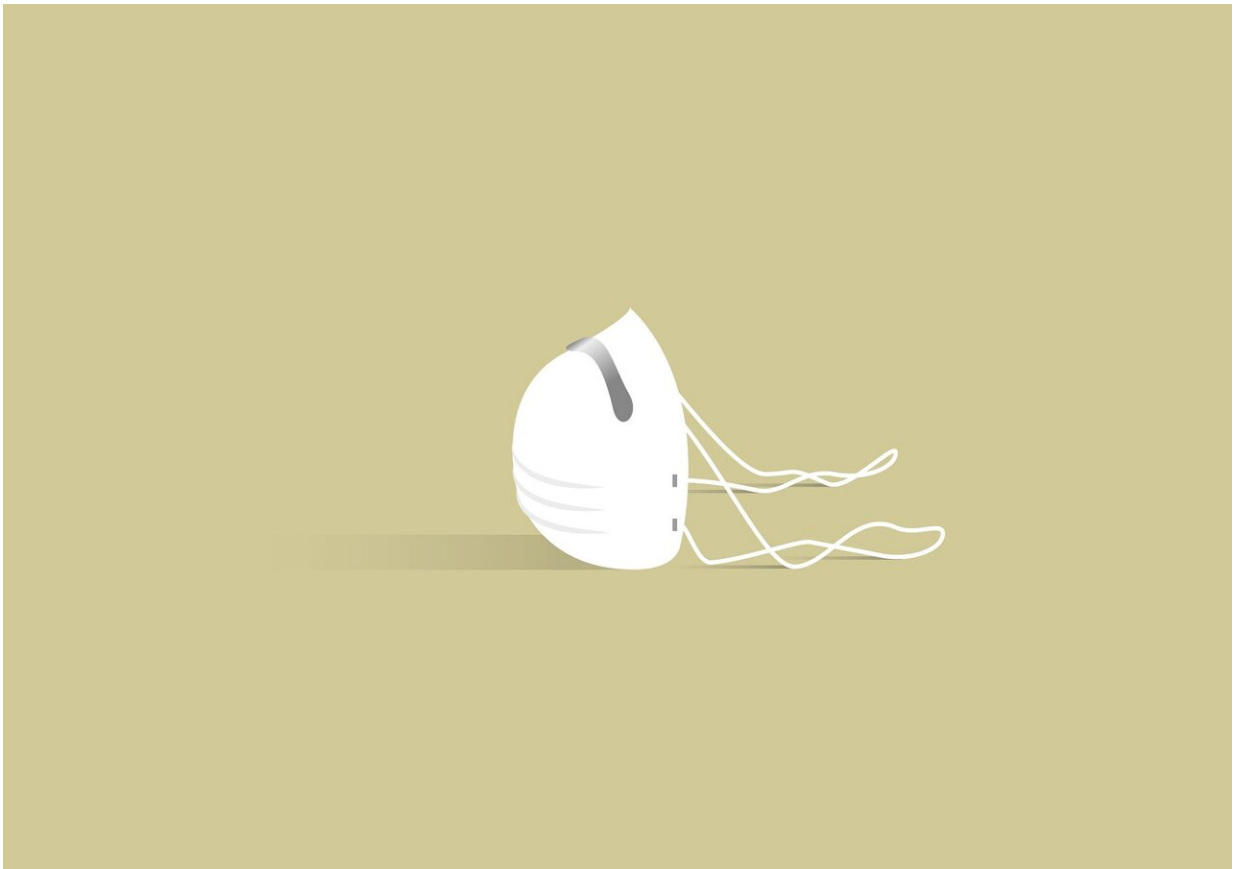


Swiss authorise remdesivir for wide use against COVID-19

July 2 2020



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Switzerland announced Thursday that COVID-19 patients beyond those on clinical trials could be given remdesivir, the first drug shown to be

relatively effective in treating the new coronavirus.

At least two major US studies have shown that the anti-viral drug can reduce the duration of hospital stays for those suffering from the novel coronavirus.

"With [immediate effect](#), remdesivir can be used more widely in Switzerland for the treatment of COVID-19 patients," the government said in a statement.

Following a swift review this week, Swissmedic, the national agency for therapeutic products, said it would allow the temporary distribution of the drug, which was originally intended as a treatment for Ebola.

"Products containing the active substance remdesivir and marketed under the brand name Veklury may be used in Swiss hospitals, without authorisation, for the treatment of COVID-19 patients," the statement said.

The product will be made available to patients outside approved [clinical trials](#) and the approved compassionate use programme, pending a decision on full authorisation of the drug.

Clinicians will monitor any [adverse reactions](#) to the [drug](#) to ensure [patient safety](#), the government said.

Cases rising again

Switzerland had largely got the virus under control, but, from a low and stable base, has witnessed a resurgence in cases in the last week or so.

The wealthy European nation, population 8.5 million, said in Thursday's daily COVID-19 update that 31,884 people had tested positive for the

new coronavirus since it was first detected in Switzerland in February.

Some 4,051 people have been hospitalised and 1,685 have died. Nearly 600,000 PCR tests for the virus have been conducted, with 6.4 percent proving positive.

The United States has bought up almost all the supply of remdesivir.

Washington announced this week that it had purchased 92 percent of all [remdesivir](#) production by the California-based Gilead laboratory until the end of September—about 500,000 treatments out of nearly 550,000. Each treatment requires 6.25 vials on average.

The World Health Organization's emergencies director Michael Ryan said Wednesday that the Geneva-based UN agency was looking into procurement details.

"There are many people around the world who are very sick with this disease and we want to ensure that everybody has access to the necessary life-saving interventions," he told a virtual briefing.

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