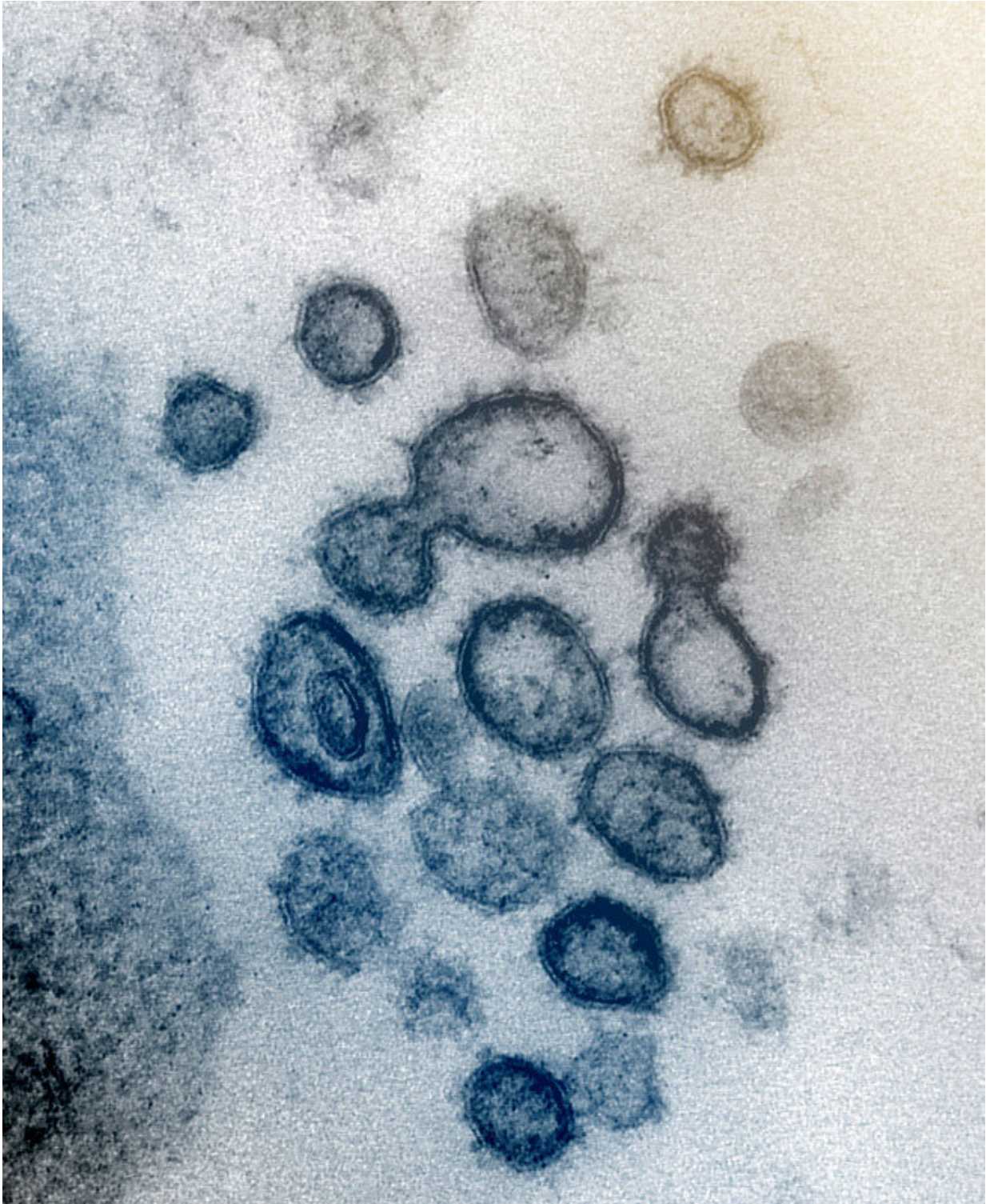


European drug watchdog reviews AstraZeneca anti-COVID cocktail

October 14 2021



This transmission electron microscope image shows SARS-CoV-2 -- also known as 2019-nCoV, the virus that causes COVID-19 -- isolated from a patient in the US. Virus particles are shown emerging from the surface of cells cultured in the

lab. The spikes on the outer edge of the virus particles give coronaviruses their name, crown-like. Credit: NIAID-RML

Europe's drug watchdog said Thursday it has started evaluating AstraZeneca's anti-COVID cocktail called Evusheld, which could eventually lead to the authorisation of its use in the EU.

The move comes after AstraZeneca this week said trials showed that the [drug](#), made from a combination of two [monoclonal antibodies](#), reduced severe COVID-19 symptoms and deaths.

The decision to start the rolling review "is based on preliminary results from [clinical studies](#), which suggest that the medicine may help protect against the disease," the European Medicines Agency (EMA) said.

It can take several months between the start of a rolling review by the EMA and any eventual green light.

Monoclonal [antibodies](#)—which recognise a specific molecule of the target virus or bacteria—are synthetic versions of natural antibodies.

They are administered to people already infected, to make up for deficiencies in the [immune system](#) .

This is different from a vaccine, which stimulates the body to produce its own immune response.

AstraZeneca's separate COVID vaccine is one of the four jabs currently approved for the EU.

The company said on Monday that it had seen "positive results" from the

new drug, also known as AZD7442, with a "statistically significant reduction in severe COVID-19 or death" in non-hospitalised patients with mild-to-moderate symptoms.

The trial involved 903 participants and 90 percent of them were people at high risk of progression to severe COVID-19.

Evusheld is yet another tool in the arsenal to fight COVID-19, which has now killed at least 4.8 million people since the outbreak emerged in China in December 2019.

Swiss pharma giant Roche applied to the EMA on Monday to authorise its anti-COVID cocktail called Ronapreve, while the agency last week said it could soon start reviewing Merck's new COVID pill.

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Citation: European drug watchdog reviews AstraZeneca anti-COVID cocktail (2021, October 14) retrieved 6 May 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-10-european-drug-watchdog-astrazeneca-anti-covid.html>

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