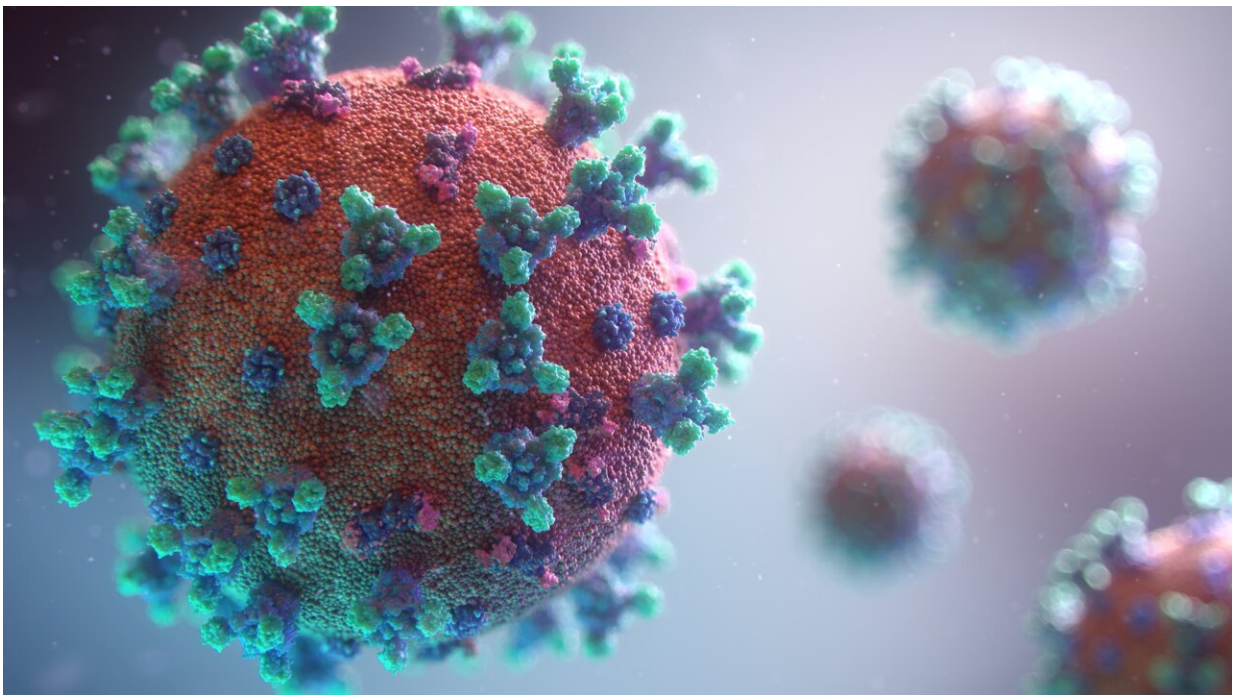


Researchers find cohorting patient care model during pandemic improved patient outcomes

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In a study published in *JAMA Network Open*, University of Minnesota Medical School researchers found that, during the extenuating circumstances of an emerging pandemic, grouping patients together in one area or facility was successful in providing high-quality care and

containing infectious patients.

Called cohorting, this patient care model was implemented by M Health Fairview early in the pandemic when little was known about how to effectively treat patients with COVID-19.

"This study highlights the academic and clinical expertise of the M Health Fairview system to deliver outstanding medical care to the people of Minnesota," said Dr. Greg Beilman, a critical care surgeon at the U of M Medical School and was a co-lead of the M Health Fairview COVID-19 response team. "In this study we demonstrated our ability to rapidly bring [new developments](#) in science to the patient's bedside and improve outcomes for patients affected by this frequently dire disease."

Because every person being treated in the cohorts had COVID-19, frontline healthcare workers quickly became well-versed in COVID-19 care. These experienced specialists worked side by side with academic physicians who were translating the latest medical research into new solutions they could apply in real time to patient care. COVID-19 patients had access to leading-edge clinical trials, internal COVID-19 testing capabilities, and innovative technology.

The study found that dedicated COVID-19 units in Minnesota were associated with a 2% overall improvement in in-hospital survival rates when patients were properly matched for severity of illness. Complications associated with COVID-19 were significantly better in this group as was the rapid implementation of new care processes by health care providers.

"The opportunity to care for patients at our COVID-19 cohort hospitals was a shining light in a dark time for many of us," said Dr. Andrew Olson, medical intensivist at the U of M Medical School and medical director of COVID hospital medicine at M Health Fairview. "We

watched our colleagues develop expertise, conduct research and care for one another while staying healthy in a challenging time."

The research team hopes the cohorting method could be implemented when there are outbreaks of infectious diseases, like viral pneumonia. This is due to the fact that the framework helps provide infectious patients the best care during times of rapid learning in scientific research.

"As the pandemic progressed, we had broad availability of personal protective equipment, vaccinations, and more health care workers developed familiarity with treatment of COVID-19," said Dr. Beilman. "These developments combined with the fact that the incidence of COVID decreased last year—this care model was no longer necessary."

Researchers plan to further study which patients benefit most from care at such facilities, as well as evaluate the experience for those healthcare professionals who work in them.

More information: Zachary R. Bergman et al, Comparison of Outcomes and Process of Care for Patients Treated at Hospitals Dedicated for COVID-19 Care vs Other Hospitals, *JAMA Network Open* (2022). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.0873](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.0873)

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