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NEWLY DIAGNOSED COVID-19 PATIENTS ELIGIBLE FOR CLINICAL TRIAL AT JABSOM

*COVID-19 dysregulates a hormone system causing damage to the heart and lungs;
a common blood pressure drug just might help.*

HONOLULU— The first outpatient clinical trial in Hawaii is aimed at finding an effective treatment for patients with COVID-19 using telmisartan, a medication commonly used for blood pressure control.

Researchers at the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) University of Hawaii (UH) announced they need 40 patients to participate in the 21-day clinical trial. The study drug telmisartan may prevent the viral infection from developing into a life-threatening disease that requires hospitalization.

"We will test the hypothesis that much of the dangerous lung and heart effects of COVID-19 is caused by the virus' ability to dysregulate the delicate balance in a hormone system in our body called the renin angiotensin system," said Dr. Cecilia Shikuma, Professor of Medicine at JABSOM and the lead investigator for this study. "Telmisartan lowers blood pressure by blocking the harmful effects of this hormone system, and we hope to find preliminary evidence that taking the drug will also prevent much of the harmful effects of the virus."

The research has UH Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to proceed. Dr. Shikuma adds that "It is an advantage that telmisartan is already FDA approved and much of the safety concerns of this drug is already known."

Prospective patients are adults who are symptomatic and recently diagnosed to have COVID-19 said Cris Milne RN, the research nurse for the study. Medications will be given for a total of 21 days. The study will also draw blood and obtain throat swabs at the study visits. Participants will be asked to monitor temperature and blood pressures at home.

The study is listed in the national clearinghouse for clinical trials (ClinicalTrials.gov) as [NCT04360551](https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/study/NCT04360551).

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