



Weekly update

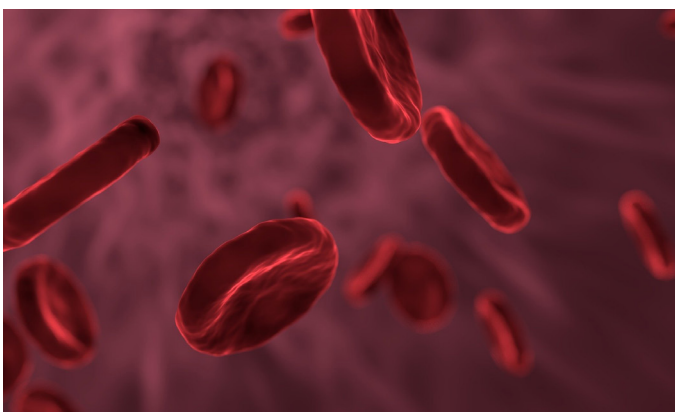
Through our research, community outreach and expert commentary, the University of Birmingham is taking an active role in the fightback against COVID-19. You can read our latest statements and follow our research updates at www.birmingham.ac.uk/coronavirus.

Through Birmingham Health Partners, a strategic alliance between the University and two NHS Foundation Trusts, we are working to support frontline healthcare professionals. For the latest updates visit their [website](#).

Research

Birmingham designed test confirms COVID-19 as trigger for rare Kawasaki-like syndrome in children

A test developed by experts in Birmingham has offered evidence confirming COVID-19 to be the cause of a newly emerged multi-system inflammatory syndrome in children, who have tested negative for the virus by the PCR test. This raises the possibility that children who may have had the virus in their system, even if they haven't been unwell, could be at risk of developing this new condition.



Reports have emerged in recent weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic, of children presenting with symptoms similar to those seen in Kawasaki disease; a rare condition, usually seen in under-fives, that causes a persistently high temperature, rashes and inflammation of the blood vessels. This new condition has recently been termed Paediatric Inflammatory Multi-System Syndrome - Temporally associated with SARS-CoV-2 (PIMS-TS) and to date has affected around

100 children in the UK with further reports of cases across Europe and the United States.

This latest research demonstrates the value of an antibody test, developed by a team at the University of Birmingham, to confirm the diagnosis of children hospitalised with symptoms consistent with PIMS-TS. All of the children tested negative for the SARS-CoV-2 virus by PCR. This research was the product of a collaboration between the University of Birmingham, Birmingham Health Partners, Birmingham Women's and Children's NHS Foundation Trust, University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust, the University of Southampton and The Binding Site Group Ltd. ([More information](#))

First drugs announced in major COVID-19 drugs trial

Two UK drugs companies will be the first to partner with the Universities of Birmingham and Oxford as part of a major new UK drugs trial to test potential therapeutics to treat patients hospitalised with COVID-19. In what could be a significant development in the fight against the virus the CATALYST trial, which is a collaboration with University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust (UHB), will test a series of new drugs, including those already in use for patients with cancer and inflammatory diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis. ([More information](#))

Community resilience or resourcefulness?

Researchers at the University of Birmingham's Third Sector Research Centre have worked with Local Trust and Sheffield Hallam University on a briefing note looking at how communities across England respond to COVID-19 and how they recover. The paper aims to develop understanding of ideas about 'resourcefulness' as an alternative to narratives about 'resilience,' through specific examples of community responses to the current crisis. ([More information](#))

COG-UK Preliminary Analysis Reveals the Frequency and Source of Virus introductions into the UK

The latest analysis of the COVID-19 epidemic in the UK combines large-scale data and genomic sequencing to provide a detailed picture of the number and sources of SARS-CoV-2 introductions into the UK. The study by researchers at the University of Oxford, University

of Edinburgh, and the COVID-19 Genomics UK Consortium (COG-UK), shows how and when the SARS-CoV-2 virus entered the UK, mostly from European countries during March. The rate of virus importation peaked around 15 March. Nick Loman, Professor of Microbial Genomics and Bioinformatics in the Institute of Microbiology and Infection, is leading the team at the University of Birmingham who are part of the COVID-19 Genomics UK Consortium.

[\(More information\)](#)

Coldchain experts explore how COVID-19 vaccine could be distributed in Africa

Scientists are launching a key study to help African nations prepare for the sustainable distribution of an eventual COVID-19 vaccine. Mass, rapid COVID-19 vaccination will be an immense challenge for sub-Saharan Africa countries with significant rural populations and existing cold-chain infrastructure will need to be significantly improved if a vaccine is to reach the people who need it.

Working with the United Nations Environment Program – United for Efficiency team, researchers from the University of Birmingham and Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, are undertaking a fast-track study in Rwanda to explore how the cold-chain is currently used to distribute vaccines in the country.

[\(More information\)](#)

European universities' alliance COVID-19 policy commission launch

Experts from the European University of Well-being (EUniWell) collaboration of European universities, including Birmingham, are launching a policy commission that aims to improve the wellbeing of people across Europe and beyond living under the shadow of the global coronavirus pandemic. The opening panel discussion will take place on 17 June from 2.00 to 3.30 p.m. (CEST) [\(More information\)](#)

Community

Are you wearing a face mask during the #Covid19 crisis?

Interviewed by one of our medical students for a video on Facebook, Professor of Public Health KK Cheng answered questions on whether face masks actually work and who they can help. [\(More information\)](#)

Clinicians from Universities Hospitals Birmingham and the University of Birmingham have also produced infographic guidance on how to wear a mask safely. [\(More information\)](#)



Leadership in crisis: What do we expect from leaders during the Covid-19 pandemic? (25 June)

The Work Inclusivity Research Centre at the University of Birmingham have organised a webinar looking at leadership during the pandemic. It's rapidly becoming clear that Covid-19's effects are gendered in complex ways, in ways that can either reinforce or challenge existing inequalities. Leadership is one of the most visible arenas for observing this. This seminar focuses on leading, leaders, and leadership, asking questions and looking for hope. Speakers include: Professor Rosie Campbell, Director, Global Institute for Women's Leadership, Kings College London; Professor Christopher Pietroni, Director, Institute of Leadership, University of Birmingham [\(Register here\)](#)

Doing things differently - the new normal (18 June)

The Institute for Global Innovation are holding their next webinar in their 'living with the pandemic series'. This time, Dr Suzanne Bartington will talk about the future of local and international travel, Dr Pilar Rojas Gavira will talk about shopping and retail post-COVID and Professor Deborah Youdell will discuss how we will educate our children in the coming two years. [\(Register here\)](#)

Comment

Lockdown: crimes in the home are on the up – new measures are needed to alert the authorities

Professor Siddhartha Bandyopadhyay and Dr Joht Singh Chandan, alongside Professor Eddie Kane from the University of Nottingham, have written about domestic violence related to COVID-19. While no published studies have tracked the national trends, several indicators point to a marked increase in domestic violence. [\(More information\)](#)

Contact us

Email: publicaffairs@contacts.bham.ac.uk
Twitter: [@BhamPolicy](https://twitter.com/BhamPolicy)

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