PCORnet® Response to COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has demanded fast answers to many questions: How do we prevent COVID-19? How do we treat it? How can we mitigate serious disease? Researchers responded rapidly and collaboratively to answer these questions by using PCORnet®, the National Patient-Centered Clinical Research Network. PCORnet has been funded by the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) to support faster, larger-scale, and more efficient patient-centered clinical research. Learn more about how PCORnet is part of our national response to COVID-19.

CDC uses PCORnet resources to expand national understanding of COVID-19

- Network Partners of PCORnet are leveraging their rich data—electronic health record (EHR) data that has been standardized to the PCORnet Common Data Model (CDM)—to help answer important questions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- One of the early collaborators with this work is the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in partnership with the Public Health Informatics Institute (PHII), a program of the Task Force for Global Health.

- To date, aggregate data stripped of personally identifying information related to nearly half a million patients with a COVID-19 diagnosis or SARS-CoV-2 test result have supported this important work.

- Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups Don't Receive COVID-19 Monoclonal Antibody Treatment Equally, Says New PCORnet-Leveraged Study

- Study Of 2 Million Patients Finds New Symptoms And Conditions Months After COVID-19 Are Infrequent But Potentially Serious And Long-Lasting

- New Study Finds Risk Of Myocarditis And Pericarditis Is Substantially Higher After COVID-19 Infection Than After Vaccination

PCORnet and ACTIV-6: Finding outpatient therapies for COVID-19

- Accelerating COVID-19 Therapeutic Interventions and Vaccines (ACTIV) is a public-private partnership to develop a coordinated research strategy for prioritizing and speeding development of the most promising treatments and vaccines.

- PCORnet is supporting ACTIV-6, serving as the clinical and data coordinating centers, promoting effective patient and stakeholder engagement, and contributing to approximately 40 vanguard sites. ACTIV-6 is a platform trial assessing the effectiveness of repurposed medications to treat mild to moderate COVID-19 in the outpatient setting and prevent more serious illness requiring hospitalization.

- Medications currently being studied in ACTIV-6 are fluticasone, fluvoxamine, and ivermectin.
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HERO Research Program launched rapidly

- Recognizing that people working in healthcare were at greatest risk when the pandemic started, PCORI funded the HERO Research Program.

- The HERO Registry was launched April 13, 2020, in less than one month from the start of discussions, and now includes over 55,000 people in every U.S. state who can participate in research that affects healthcare workers.

- HERO-HCQ, also launched in April 2020, was a randomized controlled trial looking at whether hydroxychloroquine was effective in preventing COVID-19 infection.

  • HERO-Together, funded by Pfizer, was launched in December 2020, to partner with healthcare workers receiving COVID-19 vaccines and learn about the short- and long-term impacts of vaccination.

  • The HERO Registry has surveyed participants throughout the pandemic to understand their experiences – from personal protective equipment to personal financial impact and vaccine willingness.

PCORnet-enabled research studies evolved to address COVID-19 questions

- The Identifying and Predicting Patients with Preventable High Utilization project initially set out to use PCORnet to better understand and support people who frequently visit health care systems. To address COVID-19, the research team is also using the project’s existing infrastructure to develop prediction models to plan for resource needs and improve outcomes for patients hospitalized with COVID-19. Review paper.

- Variation in Case Management Programs and Their Effectiveness in Managing High-Risk Patients for Medicare ACOs, a study using PCORnet resources to improve case management programs in health systems, expanded its scope to understand how the pandemic-driven shift to telehealth is affecting care and health outcomes for older patients with multiple chronic health problems. Review paper.

- Comparing Ways for Patients and Clinics to Improve Blood Pressure Control seeks to monitor how well clinics and patients are controlling blood pressure. It is using the same PCORnet-enabled cohort of patients to examine how taking different types of blood pressure medicines affects patients’ risk for contracting COVID-19 and severity of infection.

PCORnet-enabled studies answering COVID-19 questions about healthcare delivery:

- PCORI provided $5 million in funding for the Comparing Patient-Reported Impact of COVID-19 Shelter-in-Place Policies and Access to Containment and Mitigation Strategies, Overall and in Vulnerable Populations study. It is comparing the impacts of COVID-19-related policy decisions in seven different states on people's health and financial well-being, focusing particularly on racial and ethnic minorities. Researchers are recruiting participants through PCORnet.

- PCORI provided $3 million in funding for a Joan and Sanford I. Weill Medical College of Cornell University study examining the comparative effectiveness of different approaches to providing primary care during the widespread transition from in-person to remote visits during the pandemic. The study uses PCORnet to examine the impact of telemedicine on patient-centered outcomes and disparities in outcomes for patients with chronic disease at many clinics.

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