HealthManagement
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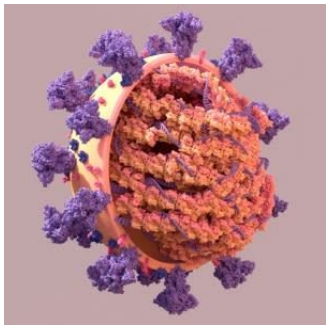
Newly Funded Project Aims to Monitor Impact of COVID-19 Variants



A three-year project, known as END-VOC, will analyse data from 28 established cohort studies in 23 countries, collaborating with 19 partners across the world. This large-scale study, funded by the European Commission, and led by UCL, aims to collect this data to better detect and improve understanding of emerging SARS-CoV-2 variants.

The purpose is to learn more about these variants by bringing together cohorts in Europe, Africa, South America and Asia. Thus,knowledge about these variants may vastly improve, allowing researchers to achieve impact beyond COVID-19.

All viruses, including SARS-CoV-2, evolve over time. Some changes may affect virus' properties, including how easily it is transmitted or the severity of the disease, i.e. it may cause more severe disease.

Professor Ibrahim Abubakar, principal investigator of the study, added, "Detecting emerging COVID-19 variants of concern, and understanding their implications on diagnostics, vaccination strategies and treatment options is key to guiding our response to the virus".

The project focuses on five areas including the detection and characterisation of emerging SARS-CoV-2 variants, assessing their capacity to evade vaccine-mediated immunity or cause reinfections, and escape current treatments. Further, the project aims to understand the risk and cause of long COVID. Lastly, it aims to provide recommendations to support countries in responding to future infectious disease outbreaks.

New tools will be used to anticipate how SARS-CoV-2 variants might evolve. Specifically, it aims to looks how it might evolve when variants are likely to cause long COVID, and the impact this may have among different population groups.

Additionally, the study seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of vaccines and treatments against the new variants, which will help to guide future actions against potential outbreaks.

Overall, the aim of this project is to ensure countries are better prepared to respond to COVID-19 and future pandemics.

Source: UCL

Image Credit: iStock

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