

Roche launches test for coronavirus variants

March 16 2021

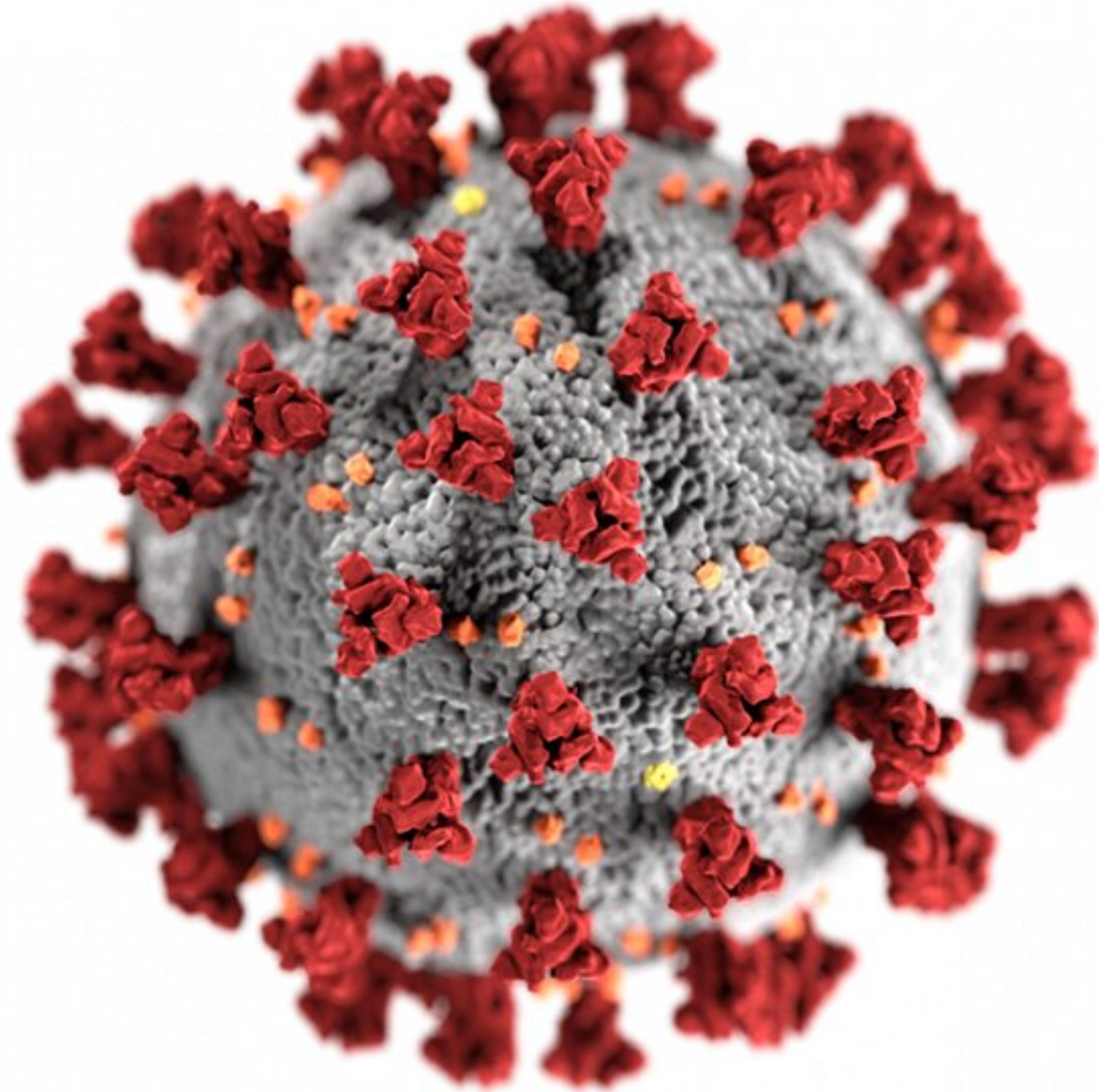


Image of the ultrastructural morphology exhibited by the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV). Credit: CDC

Swiss pharma giant Roche announced Tuesday the launch of a new test to help researchers find coronavirus variants which are feared to be more harmful or could undermine vaccines.

The new laboratory test is designed to detect mutations on the virus and monitor their prevalence and potential impact on infection, vaccines and therapies to combat COVID-19, the disease it causes, Roche said in a statement.

"Continuous surveillance is essential to [public health](#)," Roche said.

The appearance of variants has caused much concern in recent months with those from the UK, Brazil and South Africa in particular widely believed to be more transmissible and possibly more dangerous.

Roche's [new test](#) can be run on its Cobas 6800/8800 machines which are widely used in research laboratories and hospitals, it said.

Roche has been a pioneer in coronavirus testing since the virus first surfaced in China in late 2019 before spreading around the world.

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Citation: Roche launches test for coronavirus variants (2021, March 16) retrieved 19 November 2023 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-03-roche-coronavirus-variants.html>

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