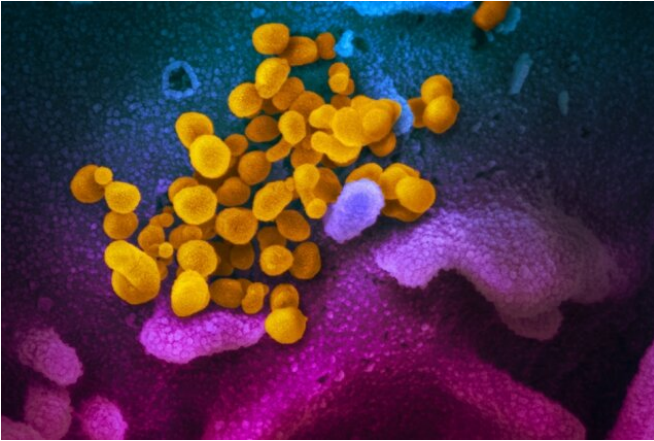


Brazil to help test Oxford coronavirus vaccine

3 June 2020



This scanning electron microscope image shows SARS-CoV-2 (yellow)—also known as 2019-nCoV, the virus that causes COVID-19—isolated from a patient, emerging from the surface of cells (blue/pink) cultured in the lab. Credit: NIAID-RML

An experimental vaccine against the new coronavirus developed at the University of Oxford will be tested from mid-June in Brazil, the first country outside Britain to take part in the study, researchers said Wednesday.

The vaccine will be tested in Brazil on 2,000 volunteers, who will be recruited starting this week, said the Federal University of Sao Paulo, which is coordinating the study.

Volunteers "must be [health professionals](#) between 18 and 55 years old and be at high risk of infection, for example, cleaning and support staff in units treating COVID-19 patients," the Brazilian university's president, Soraya Smaili, told AFP.

Testing the vaccine in Brazil "is very important because we are in the acceleration phase of the epidemiological curve," she added.

Brazil is the latest epicenter in the coronavirus pandemic.

The country of 210 million people is now second only to the United States in total cases, with more than 555,000, and has registered more than 31,000 deaths, the fourth-highest toll in the world, after the US, Britain and Italy.

Experts say under-testing means the real figures in Brazil are probably much higher.

Testing is due to start in Brazil the second week in June and expand to other countries after that, the university said.

"The results will be fundamental for the vaccine's approval in the United Kingdom, expected late this year," it added.

Oxford is partnering with British pharmaceuticals group AstraZeneca to develop and distribute the vaccine, one of several that researchers around the world are racing to test.

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